

HOME WITH THE HOOPING-COUGH;

OR,

HOW THEY MADE THE BEST OF IT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

CHAPTER III.

THE doctors let off their hooping-cough patients a good deal more easily than they formerly did. I remember when we had that troublesome complaint, which was when I was about ten years old, a large, airy room was turned into a kind of hospital-ward, in which we were kept day and night. Did we mind it much? By no means, though our captivity lasted six weeks, and we were limited all that time to vegetable diet. We were tired of mashed carrots, mashed turnips, and rice pudding, but we were not very tired of being shut up, especially in winter.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

And our cage, if it could be called one, had large windows looking out on a reach of the noble river Thames, with a magnificent willow-tree in the garden before our house, and a broad bridge over which something was generally passing. Then the walls of our room were papered with a Chinese paper which I have never seen equalled. It was covered with figures about four inches long, no two groups resembling each other, and portraying the domestic life of the Chinese in a most interesting manner. I don't suppose even the Royal Family had such an entertaining nursery.

During those six weeks, our mother was our almost constant companion, except that she daily took an hour's walk for the good of her health. She was a most delightful companion, and during her short walk we were in charge of a nice middle-aged servant named Elizabeth. At ten years old, I of course did not require much looking after, but the little ones did. I had paints, and patchwork, and nice books. Certainly most of my reading was of the entertaining sort, but I had just learnt to read French understandingly, and I not only had "L'Ami des Enfants" in four little volumes, but Cléry's "Journal of what passed

in the Tower of the Temple during the Imprisonment of Louis the Sixteenth," which I thought then, and think now, a very interesting book. My younger brother painted sixty little landscapes of his own designing, with a neat scarlet border round each, which my grandfather afterwards bought of him for five shillings, as an encouragement of industry. How much was that apiece?

Still, an illness of this sort going through a house is a trying thing, in spite of its alleviations: and we must make every allowance for a great boy like Fulk Howard, when he was cross and impatient from time to time. He did not bear it nearly as well as his younger brothers. His mother could understand him, and feel for him; but she had so much cause for anxiety in the nursery, that she could not bestow much time on the boys in "Mamma's parlour," who seemed likely to do very well. Indeed, one of Fulk's grievances was, that neither she nor Mr. Blythe, the family doctor, thought him ill enough, and for this reason he felt rather surly when that cheerful medical man came briskly in and said:

"Well, young men, and how do you all do to-day?"

And after a very brief course of questions (not going at all into their peculiar symptoms, Fulk was accustomed to complain) would give them a circular wave of the hand as he went away, saying:

"Ah, ah, you'll none of you die this time. You haven't illness enough among the lot to make up one decent case."

"Just as if we wanted to make up a decent case!" grumbled Fulk as soon as the doctor was out of hearing. "I only wish he felt as I do for one day, that's all."

"For one day? Oh, Fulk! and what would become of his patients?"

"Perhaps they'd do just as well without him."

"Well, I know we all watched very anxiously for him yesterday, when Flory was so ill."

"And what did he say to mamma when he came? My dear madam, you've done the very thing I should have ordered myself."

"And very satisfactory for mamma to hear."

"Satisfactory? yes, but don't you see she knew quite as well what to do as Mr. Blythe? My belief (except in case of breaking a bone, you know, or something of that sort) is that doctors are humbugs."

"And my belief is," said Blanche, laughing, "that you got out of the wrong side of your bed this morning, and had better try the other side to-morrow."

Then she began to stroke his hair the wrong way and make funny faces at him, till he could not help laughing. "Make clouds and sunshine, Blanche," said he. Then she slowly passed her hand over her face, from right to left, and as she removed it, revealed the most miserable, whiney-piney countenance it is possible to imagine. Then she slowly passed her hand over her face from left to right, and when she removed it, there was her own merry smile, merrier than ever.

After this she amused the boys by "walking short," viz. mysteriously reducing her real height several inches, by which means she looked ridiculously out of proportion. Then, at Fulk's request, she recited some blank verse very pompously, with her hands behind her, while Lewis's hands (his head and body out of sight) appeared "like little fins" from under her arms, and gesticulated in absurd action. Having thus "run her female exercises o'er," Blanche declared herself tired, and sat down to crochet work, while Lewis went to look after Mervyn.

Fulk said, after a pause, "If you and I were in each other's places, I am afraid I could not be as companionable to you as you are to me,—and I'm afraid—no, that's a wrong word—I'm pretty sure you'd bear my little troubles better than I do—but you can't think how they worry a fellow."

"Since you own them to be little troubles, I have some hope of you," said Blanche. "Don't you think you might bear them better if you put on a stronger motive-power?"

"Of what kind?"

"A little Christianity—a little submission, for instance."

"Oh, of course," said Fulk, gravely; "but, somehow, one has not the energy when one's ill."

"That's the very time when the energy is wanted."

"And then, again, as to submission—I've a good deal to submit to, Blanche, that you don't guess, and that tries me precious, I assure you."

"Indeed?" said Blanche. "Tell me all about it."

"It isn't merely the being ill that I care about—I've spirit enough, I hope, not to mind that, if that were all. But only think how it interferes with all my plans—all my views!"

"Snowballing, and skating, and so-forth?"

"No, no! though I have to do without those things too. But think of the prize essay I was to prepare during the holidays!"

"Well, think of it yourself, and you'll be able to write it when you get well."

"When will that be?
Said the bells of Step-ney."

To this Blanche boldly replied :

"In a fortnight or so,
Said the belle to the beau."

"I'm sure I hope the belle may be right."

"Am I not generally so, Mr. Doubtful Despond?"

"Then, Blanche, only think of my losing my visit to Uncle John."

"That is a disappointment, I admit," said Blanche, "but you may hope to go another time."

"Another time will not be the same thing! I shall lose seeing Tom. Tom's on leave now, but he may be ordered to the Curragh, or to Canada, or even to India, before I can go to Fairley. Oh, Blanche, it's *this* that worries me so."

"How glad I am that you have told me," said Blanche, with sympathy. "It will not worry you nearly so much now."

"I don't know about that. I wanted to hear all about Tom's experiences. I shall never have such an opportunity again. I may rue the loss of it all my life. You know, Blanche, I have long had an inclination for the army."

"Which mamma does not altogether approve," said Blanche.

"She is not absolutely against it, though," said Fulk, "because there are so many of us to provide for. We have some good connexions; and the army is not what it used to be."

"How do you know?"

"Because I've heard. But the fact is, I want to hear a good deal more, and Tom could have told me."

"Well, it is a pity. One comfort is, that you are too young to need to decide for some time to come."

"Not at all," said Fulk. "If I knew what my future course was to be, I could be preparing for it. For instance, if I were going to be a civil engineer, like Frank Harley, I could be learning mathematics and drawing plans. If I wanted to be a sailor, like Sam Pitt, I must learn all about navigation and seamanship—about working tides and taking altitudes, and how to find the longitude by the time-keeper—I mean as

far as I could, you know, beforehand. I don't even know whether these things *can* be learnt on shore."

"And mathematics," put in Blanche. "They are wanted for a sailor as well as a civil engineer. Perhaps soldiers want them too."

"That is one of the things Tom could tell me. I've a notion soldiers have a pretty deal more to do than they think of when they enlist; and officers a great deal more than galloping about in full uniform."

"Certainly," said Blanche. "Only think of the Duke of Wellington."

"Aye, or the Napiers."

"Well, I think you must not talk any more now."

"No, I've hardly any voice left. But *what* a pity to miss seeing Tom!"

"You must recollect the saying, 'Whatever is is best.'"

"That's not a Bible saying."

"No, but it is very much in the spirit of the Bible. And another saying, of Matthew Henry's, I believe, and a great favourite of mamma's, is, 'Duties are our's, events are God's.'"

"What very grave thoughts you have this afternoon, Blanche!"

"Because I think you need them. You have a trial which, to you, is a great one. It requires strength beyond your own to lift off."

"Yes, that's just it. You've hit the right nail on the head."

"Very well; then apply for that strength. And then I believe your trial will be removed, or you will have strength to bear it."

Blanche left the room as she spoke, and Fulk lay very quiet. Presently he got up and wrote a little. When his head ached too much for him to go on, he left off, and leant back in the great easy chair, meditating very sedately. By-and-by when his mother came in, she laid her hand on his head and said, "You look better, my boy," and kissed him.

"How are *you*, mamma?"

"Oh, I get on pretty well, my love! If you all go on well, I shall do very well."

It occurred to Fulk with more force than it had ever done yet, how much his mother was going through just now.

"Blanche helps me famously," said she presently.

"Blanche is a capital girl," said Fulk with energy. "A regular brick."

At this instant a violent ring at the house-door bell made them both start, and in another minute a loud cheerful voice was heard in the hall, saying:

"Is Mr. Howard at home? or Mrs. Howard? Oh, I'm sure she'll see me."

"Tom, I do believe!" exclaimed Fulk joyously; and the next moment Tom put his merry face in at the door.

"May I come in, aunt? How do you do? How are you, Fulk? I couldn't go back to quarters without coming over to see you all. Afraid? Oh, not in the least. A soldier afraid? Ha, ha, ha! Mervy, is that you? Why, you've grown enormously this half. How are you, Lewis? Where's Blanche? You are all cut off from society at present, of course; but I've had everything that's to be caught, except plague and yellow fever."

"I'm so glad you are come, Tom!" said Fulk.

"Are you, old boy? Thanks. We expected to have you over at our place this Christmas, but our people are horridly afraid of infection, contagion, and everything of that sort; so, you know, it couldn't be, even if you'd been able to come. So I said I'd run over and see you on my way to quarters. I didn't like to go back without it; and I wanted to see what you thought of my moustache!"

CHAPTER IV.

As Tom had come a considerable distance, through snow and sleet, it was to be supposed he was hungry; and his aunt ordered refreshments for him in the dining-room, whither they all repaired. Tom admitted that he was very glad of some roast beef, but when he was offered wine and ale he said, "No, thanks," and poured out a glass of water. Again, when Mrs. Howard offered him some raspberry jam tart he said, "No, thank you, aunt, I'm in training."

The boys pricked up their ears at this; and Mrs. Howard said, "Tom, you have become very self-denying."

"Oh, I don't claim any praise for it. When a fellow's in training, you know, he must take what's good for him, and not what he likes."

"Not pudding?" said Mervyn, in such dismay that everybody laughed.

"Pudding now and then, of the squash-pudding sort," said Tom, "but no pie-crust, Mervy, nor ale, nor wine, nor cheese, nor too much butter, nor too much anything."

"I'd no idea soldiers starved so," said Lewis.

"Well, they don't," said Tom, slicing away at the beef.

"But don't you get laughed at, Tom," said Blanche, "for not taking wine at mess?"

"Who minds being laughed at?" said Tom. "The officers of our mess are gentlemen, and many of them have left off wine from economy. 'Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind,' is our maxim. When I joined, I was a little laughed at, I grant you, for only drinking the Queen's health on guest-nights; but they soon found I was no muff, and let me 'gang my ain gate.'"

"That was very nice," said Blanche.

"But why," inquired Fulk, "should you leave off wine, and so forth?"

"Partly for the sake of example, and partly for my own sake. The privates seldom get into scrapes that are not traceable to drinking: we cannot well advise them to be temperate if we are not so ourselves. For my part, I find myself all the brighter for it."

They now returned to Mrs. Howard's parlour.

"Do you like the army, Tom?" said Fulk.

"Some things I like, and others not."

"Do tell us a little about soldiering," said Fulk. "Suppose I were to be a soldier, for instance, what must I begin with?"

"You must begin, old fellow, by cramming for your exam."

"Exam.!" repeated Mervyn, opening his eyes.

"Examination. The old dons ask you lots of questions, and if you can get a list of them beforehand, you can read up on the different subjects, and acquire a lot of information on them which enables you to give proper answers. But great numbers of fellows are so ignorant of things they ought to have learnt long ago of their mammas, and governesses, and schoolmasters, that they have to be crammed by some industrious tutor, generally a clergyman, who makes as good a job of it as he can—but it's never as good as if they had learnt it the proper way, at the proper time, when they were boys."

"No, I should think not, indeed," said Fulk, looking very serious.

"So, as to think you can get on in the army in spite of being ignorant, you see it's all fudge," said Tom. "Some precious empty subs. there are, certainly, who never by any chance open a book unless it's a novel, but still they've all had to push or be pushed through

their examination, and answer a lot of questions like parrots, if they couldn't do any better."

Here Mrs. Howard's parrot said, with unusual distinctness, "What's o'clock?" which made them all laugh.

"Poll wants to show he can ask as well as answer questions," said Lewis.

"Well, and suppose you've successfully passed your exam.?" said Fulk.

"Then in due time you join," said Tom.

"Join?—what?" said Mervyn.

"Your regiment," said Tom.

"Yes, of course," said Fulk. "Don't interrupt, Mervy."

"Preciously awkward and wretched you feel at first," said Tom. "Just like a fish out of water. At least, I know I did when I got down to Sheerness. I hadn't the least idea what to do—whether to call on the colonel in full uniform or not—where to go, or what to do in any way. Horridly afraid of being laughed at, and certain of making some ridiculous blunder."

"Horrible!" said Fulk.

"What *did* you do?" said Lewis.

"Well, I left my things at the hotel, and walked down to barracks to call on the adjutant. Luckily for me he was a frank, pleasant man. He received me very kindly, took me to the mess-room, introduced me to two or three officers, and then took me to my quarters, consisting of an empty, dusty room, very different from my nice room at home."*

"Yes, of course," said Blanche; "but you would not mind that?"

"No, not at all—where was the good? The best way was to be jolly under the circumstances. I slept at the hotel the first night, had my things sent down to quarters next morning, and felt myself monarch of all I surveyed."

"The worst was over then?" said Lewis.

"Was it?" said Tom. "Thanks for the information. They let me have a day or two to look about me, and get accustomed to my uniform. After that the adjutant handed me over to Sergeant Steady to be drilled."

"What did he do?" said Mervyn.

"This is what he did," said Tom, and he took hold of Mervyn and

* Ensign Tyro.

made him straighten his knees, put his heels together, and gave him a poke here and a poke there, and then stepped back and looked attentively at him with his head a little on one side, till Mervyn burst out laughing.

"I didn't dare laugh," said Tom; "I was as grave as a judge. After he had drilled me for an hour he dismissed me, and very glad was I to be dismissed."

"The details of every profession are irksome at first," said Mrs. Howard.

"Yes, aunt, and so you'd say if you had to study the Manual Exercise out of the Drill-book. Then, when the day has been divided between parading, studying, and idling, the mess-bugle proclaims dinner-time to have arrived. Down you go, or rather *I* go, in full fig, to the ante-room, where the officers assemble, and presently dinner is announced. Then ensue eating, drinking, and the buzz of many voices. The married officers don't dine at mess, and, as a good many of them *are* married, there is rather a large proportion of youngsters."

"The more the merrier," said Mervyn.

"They don't furnish the best talk, though," said Tom, "and when one has been used to good conversation at home, he is rather annoyed at hearing nothing but rattle and prattle, just as *you* would feel, Mervy, if you had always to dine in the nursery. Perhaps you do, though?"

"No, I don't," said Mervyn quickly. "We three mess at mamma's lunch," which professional term made the others smile.

"Mess was commonly used for the word meal in old times," said Mrs. Howard. "In the Northumberland Household Book of the reign of Henry the Seventh there are the regular rules for 'my lord's mess,' 'the nursery mess,' and so on."

"A very good word for the nursery," said Mervyn, "where the little ones upset and spill things?"

"After dinner," said Tom, "we sit a little while, and then the juniors go off to the billiard-table, or where they like. Some read, some chat, some have a nap over a newspaper; now and then a burst of noise from the subs. makes one of the senior officers grumble, 'What a row those boys are making!' By-and-by we return to our quarters, perhaps in a driving rain." *

"But you might have that anywhere if you were from home," said

* Ensign Tyro.

Fulk. "And, after all, what are these little inconveniences to the dangers and hardships of a campaign?"

"Those are in store for me," said Tom. "When I know what they are, I'll let you know."

"I hope it will be some time first," said Blanche.

"Better than reading 'Position Drill,'" said Tom, "and vegetating like an oyster in some fort."

"Surely that's better than killing people?"

"That's an open question," said Tom. "It's civilians who *make* war; soldiers only *go* to it."

"That never struck me," said Lewis. "But the civilians could not make war if soldiers would not go."

"Then the less scrupulous soldiers of other countries would walk in on them, and serve them right."

"Well, I suppose they would," said Lewis. "Then *must* there be war?"

"No; but *we* must have soldiers while others have soldiers, to keep them from walking in upon us; unless we prefer being walked in upon."

"Which I certainly should not," said Fulk.

"Hark! I hear my uncle's voice," said Tom. "Shall I go down to him, or will he come up here?"

"I think it will be best for you to come down to him with me," said Mrs. Howard, "for the boys have been talking as long as is good for them."

Of course the boys protested against this, but in vain. Tom went down with his aunt, promising to see them again before he went away.

Mervyn spent some time in letting himself be drilled by Lewis, and rather wondered that Tom should consider it anything but very good fun.

"Why do you stay up here, Blanche?" said Fulk. "You need not stay up here for me."

"I prefer it."

The good-natured girl preferred it because she knew Fulk liked having her, and would feel restless if he heard her voice added to the others in the dining-room. She would have enjoyed the little change Tom made by his lively talk as much as Fulk, but she did not think a second time about that.

"What are you meditating about?" said she to Fulk, while Mervyn continued patiently to obey Lewis's word of command.

"I'm thinking over what Tom said. He didn't give so pleasant an account of the service as I expected."

"No, but there are disagreeables in every line of life, and he does not care a pin for any of those which he mentioned."

"No, I don't suppose he does."

"I should think very poorly of him if he did; what did they amount to? Alternate study, exercise, and relaxation; it need not be idleness. He might draw or read something amusing, or write home."

"When a fellow is quite used up, he does not care for any of those things."

"Ah, I don't believe those noisy young officers, the 'rattlers and prattlers,' are often 'used up,' as you call it."

Just then Tom returned.

"What! still at 'shoulder arms,' Mervy?" cried he.

"You just drill me for once, please," said Mervyn.

"Very well; but I've come up to say good-bye, for my uncle is going to walk with me to the station as soon as he has written a letter."

"It will be ten times better, Mervy, to hear Tom talk," said Fulk.

"For you, but not for me," said Mervyn. The drill did not last very long, and a few minutes still remained for chat.

"Tell us lots more about soldiers, please," said Mervyn.

"Now then, what do you want? I have three hours' drill every day, and three hours' work by myself at the Drill-book.* Each man's turn for guard comes about once a week or once in ten days. I hope to be a thorough master of drill before I've been much longer in the service; for there really must be great pleasure in handling a large body of troops, when one can do it well."

"Handling?" repeated Lewis.

"By handling a company I mean, being master of every formation in which the sixty or seventy men can be arranged, just as if they were live chess-men."

"Is that difficult?"

"I believe you. If the officer thoroughly understands it, the men under him drill well, because they have perfect confidence in him, and don't trouble themselves to think why they should do this or that, but

* Ensign Tyro.

just obey orders. With an unskilful officer they're not sure he means what he says, or knows what he is about, and so they get confused."

"What do you do on Sundays?" said Blanche.

"Go to church to begin with at half-past eight. It's necessary for the soldiers' service to be early, that it may not interfere with the regular service at eleven. Then comes a long morning, which I enjoy immensely, as it is the only time in the week that I get really quiet for reading. Then I lunch, and start for afternoon service, sometimes with a companion, sometimes alone. After church, a good walk till dinner."

"Well, I call that a Sunday very well spent for a soldier," said Blanche.

"I don't say that some don't waste their time," said Tom. "In fact I know they *do* waste it; so they would do probably in any other position of life. 'You can take a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.' Who said that, Mervyn?"

"You said it."

"Aye, but it was a quotation."

"You should have made inverted commas, then," said Mervyn, "this way," putting up his thumbs and forefingers.

"Ha, ha, capital! I see you don't know Dr. Johnson said so."

"I should think it wouldn't take such a learned man to know that you can't make a horse drink unless he likes it," said Lewis.

"Except with a drenching-horn," said Mervyn.

"Ah well, we should none of us like to be made to drink in that way."

"And every horse would drink of its own accord if you took him to water," said Mervyn. "At any rate if he were thirsty."

"That's the very thing. Hark! my uncle calls. (Coming, sir!) You can't make him drink unless he's thirsty. And a good many people, subs or cubs as the case may be, have no thirst for improvement. Well, good-bye, all of you. I'm glad I came over. Good-bye, Fulk."

"Good-bye, Tom, I'm very glad you came. I suppose you're having all sorts of fun at Fairley?"

"Oh, no end of it! there are all the Blandford boys, who turn the house upside down. But we've no skating. The ice isn't firm enough; my father has prohibited our going on it, and what he says is law."

"Sliding, I suppose?" said Mervyn.

"Oh yes, sliding to an awful extent. Johnny has had a downfall and slit his nose up the middle. He's obliged to wear a long strip of courtplaster, which makes him look very funny. And they've made a splendid snow man. Well, good-bye; I hope you'll soon get well, and that you will come to our place next half."

"I'm sure I hope so too. Good-bye, Tom!—good-bye!"

Eagerly they watched him from the window, as the blithe, gallant young subaltern of eighteen, who was to do good service to his country in riper years—in perils by the heathen; in perils in the wilderness; in perils on the sea; in watchings often; in fastings often—and who was already training himself to "endure hardness," strode firmly down the avenue with his cap a little on one side, and switching a small cane.

[*To be continued.*]

THE COUSINS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDNEY GREY," ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CATASTROPHE.

IT was past six o'clock on the afternoon of the speech-day at King's College before Kathleen's watch at the window was rewarded by the first glimpse of her father and brothers turning into the square.

"Oh! there they are at last," she said. "Ratty is talking to papa, and laughing, but Hugh is lagging behind, quite tired, I am afraid. How I wish I might run and open the hall-door for them! but Beatrice has so often told me not to go to the door. Ah, Ratty has a book in his hand; I can't see Hugh's hands, for he is holding them behind him."

The whole family were in the hall to meet the party from the school by the time the door was shut, but, instead of the boys pressing eagerly forward to answer their sisters' questions, they hung back in silence, and left it to their father to tell the news. "All right," he

said cheerfully, leading the way into the dining-room. "Come, Ratty, don't turn shy; you were excited enough just now. Since you have succeeded for once, let us make the most of it. Come and show your prize to your sisters." The Sergeant pushed Hugh and Ratty into the room before him, and the others followed. Kathey made a spring at Ratcliffe as they entered, and so nearly strangled him by clasping her arms tightly round his neck as she exclaimed, "A prize, a prize! Oh, Ratty, *you*, have *you* actually got a prize?" that Beatrice was hardly surprised to see him push her somewhat roughly away.

"What's the use of making a row about it? Why should not I get a prize as well as other people?" he asked testily.

The Sergeant laughed. "Poor Ratty gets nothing but very uncomplimentary surprise from every one. Mr. Ward could evidently hardly believe his eyes when, on the motto of the successful composition being read out, Ratty stepped forward as the writer. I am afraid it looks as if you had been doing very much less than your best all the half year, Ratty."

"And Hugh?" asked Beatrice, anxiously. Hugh had slunk out of sight, behind Magda, but when the Sergeant turned round to look for him, he was obliged to come forward. His father put his hand on his drooping head to make him look up. "Come Hugh, my boy, you must not be down-hearted, though you have missed all the prizes this year. I consider that it was my fault, not yours, that you did not get either of the form prizes, for I have done everything I could to prevent your working for them; I know, and you know, that you have done your best all the half year. I am satisfied. Cannot you do without a prize when you know that?"

Hugh muttered something that sounded like yes, but he never raised his eyes from the ground, and the miserable expression of his face did not pass away, or lighten. The Sergeant looked at him for a minute, took his hand from his head, and sighed rather impatiently. "You really must not make such a misery of this disappointment, Hugh," he said; "it is very unmanly; and if I did not know you better, it would make me think you mean enough to grudge your brother his success. You are spoiling his pleasure in his prize, and mine too, by looking so dreadfully doleful. It is no disgrace to you that Ratty, who is only a year younger, and who has been quite as long at school, should win this one prize from you. Cyril always

cared more for your success than for his own. Surely you can find one word of congratulation for Ratcliffe. Don't you see that he is looking quite crestfallen since he came in, and that Kathleen can't be as happy about his prize as she would like to be?"

Hugh raised his eyes as his father finished speaking, and looked steadily for a minute at Ratcliffe, who had gone round to the other side of the table, and seemed to be absorbed in examining his book. It was an anxious, inquiring, almost beseeching, look. Magda, who was watching them both, perceived Ratcliffe's face grow crimson under it, and he opened his mouth as if he were going to speak. Magda's heart quite stood still, she was so afraid of what he would say. She had known after her first glance at the boys' faces that something was wrong, and her uneasy conscience made her feel sure that her own misconduct was partly answerable for it. She could not bear the thought of the whole story of the opened desk, and the stolen paper, coming out just then, with Beatrice, and her father, and every one standing round; almost involuntarily, she put her hand on Ratcliffe's shoulder, as if to stop the words that were coming. Ratty turned sharply round from Hugh to her, and if he had any intention of speaking out, something he saw in her face made him change his mind.

Quite a minute's silence passed, and then the Sergeant spoke. "Well, Hugh, I am very sorry for you," he said gravely—"sorry that you should feel your own disappointment so exclusively that you cannot rejoice generously with your brother in his success. I think you will come to a better state of mind in an hour or two, so I will not say how much such a display of selfishness in you pains me. We all dine together to-day, I think you said, Beatrice? Go and get ready, boys, and don't keep us waiting, for I have something to tell you after dinner which I think you will all be very glad to hear."

"The catastrophe" Kathleen whispered first to Magda and then to Ratty, as they were going upstairs; but both had been too pre-occupied to attend to their father's words, though they were just what it would have pleased them most to hear a few hours before.

Hugh shut the door of the boys' room, when Ratcliffe had entered after him, and went up to his brother. "Ratty," he said, "you know that what father has been saying just now is not true of me. You know I would not have grudged you the prize if you had got it fairly.

If you will only tell me that I am wrong in what I am thinking, I will be as glad as possible that you have it."

"Beastly rubbish," said Ratcliffe, throwing the handsomely-bound Virgil on the table. "I hate the sight of it. Any one might have had the prize for me. I never wanted it, and would not have given a brass farthing for all the rubbishing Greek and Latin books that were on the doctor's table."

"Then, Oh Ratty! why did you cheat to get this prize—how could you?" Hugh said in a voice almost as sternly sorrowful as that in which his father spoke sometimes. Ratcliffe's face darkened.

"You just shut up," he said, turning away, and beginning to busy himself about his mid-day toilet. "Who set you to question and suspect me? What business have you to say I cheat?"

"I can't help suspecting you, Ratcliffe; I am sure I am sorry enough," Hugh answered. "While father was talking to Doctor D——, Mr. Ward drew me aside, and showed me your verses. He thought there must have been some mistake between your motto and mine, or that I must have helped you. I told him that the verses were not mine, and that I had not helped you; but as I read them I could not help feeling sure that they were not yours either, and it flashed across me where you might have got them. Yet I can hardly believe such a thing of you, Ratty, that you would steal a copy of Cyril's old verses and show them up as your own. What was it you took from Beatrice's desk that night when we upset the drawing-room table? If you can explain that I will try to believe you have gained the prize fairly."

For answer to this question Ratty plunged his face and head into a deep basin of water, and while with much spluttering and noise he was rubbing his hair dry, he muttered from under the towel, "Just like old Ward's spite, just like his mean ways, to show you the verses and try to make you peach against me. He is not content with keeping me down and giving me impositions for nothing the whole half year, but as soon as I chance to get a prize in spite of him he must make out that I cheat. Nothing will satisfy him, I suppose, but to have me disgraced before the whole school; and you are taking the right way to help him. I never knew such a shame."

"You know I don't want to get you into trouble, Ratcliffe," said Hugh, "but I cannot bear to think of one of us cheating. Why don't you answer my question?"

By this time Ratty had twisted his wet hair into some sort of order, and now, throwing down the brush, he made for the door. "You'd best do something to yourself before you come down, Hugh," he said. "You look horribly grey and seedy, and father will be vexed with you if you come down to dinner with such a glum face. I am sorry it has turned out as it has, but I declare I never thought of such a thing as your not getting a prize. I thought you were as sure as guns of one at least of them. If I had known it would have done you any harm I would not have sent in my composition—I declare I would not. You may believe me or not as you like, but that's every word you'll ever hear me say about it; so now you know."

Ratcliffe left the door wide open when he ran downstairs, and a few minutes after Hugh saw Magda passing down. "Magda, come in here, do. Come in and shut the door, I want to speak to you," he called out.

Magda entered rather reluctantly.

"My dear Hugh, have not you begun to dress for dinner yet?" she said. "Papa will be angry with you if you are late."

"I can't help it; he is angry enough with me already; he thinks me jealous and mean-spirited, and everything that is hateful. Oh, Magda, is not it all a dreadful mess?"

"Your not getting any of the prizes, do you mean?"

"Oh no, no!" said Hugh vehemently, his eyes filling with angry tears. "You know better than that, Magda. I am sure you must guess what I am so unhappy about. I am afraid Ratcliffe did not get his prize fairly. I am afraid he found some paper that helped him to write his verses the day he was turning over the treasures in Beatrice's drawer. I know she keeps copies of some of the verses she and Cyril did together. I wish you had never begun to look at her letters, Magda; if you had only shut the desk at once this would not have happened."

Magda had been making the same reflection while she had been dressing for dinner, and unhappily it had turned her thoughts from concern at Ratty's fault to anxiety lest her own want of candour should be discovered. She was, unhappily, very expert in the dangerous art of finding plausible reasons for following her own wishes, and she had contrived to persuade herself that it would really be best to let this unhappy business pass without making any inquiry into it. If the faintest whisper of such a suspicion reached their father's ears he

would never rest, she knew, till it was thoroughly sifted; and if Ratcliffe proved guilty, how miserable and uncomfortable they would all be; and how Beatrice would blame her for placing the temptation in his way so thoughtlessly. Hugh's agitation alarmed her, and she set herself very eagerly to talk down his fears.

"We are neither of us at all certain that Ratcliffe took the paper away with him," she said. "There was such confusion I am sure I could not undertake to be sure of any thing. I picked up a great many loose papers and put them back into the drawer without looking at them. I should be very sorry to accuse Ratty of such a thing if he were innocent, and if he proved to be guilty it would be wretched for us to have brought such a serious fault home to him. Why he would be turned out of the school, and think how miserable papa would be. No, indeed, I could not bring myself to tell of him even if I were sure he had done it; and if you say anything I think it will look as if you are jealous."

"What a horrid idea! but, Magda, I never thought of telling, or of your telling. I think we ought to talk to Ratty, and try to persuade him to confess of his own accord. It does not matter so much for his getting the prize from me; but, you see, Burnet or Grant might have gained it. I shan't be able to look them in the face again for thinking that my brother has cheated them. And what must Ratty be feeling? I should think he would be just miserable till it was put right again. I wish you would talk to him, Magda; you can talk so well about things when you like, and he would listen to you better than to me, for nothing can be said about your being jealous."

"Well, I'll see," said Magda, rather reluctantly. "I don't see much good in talking to people myself—it only tempts them to tell stories. He is sure to deny it if I ask him. I am quite convinced myself that the kindest and best thing we can do now is just to say no more about our suspicions, and to let Ratty alone. You know the 'catastrophe' is coming, and that will alter everything. Ratty will never be tempted again to cheat about his lessons, and I dare say he will be quite as truthful and straightforward as anybody else when he gets to Caergebi. Papa is going to tell us the grand news after dinner; do try to look a little pleasant, Hugh. Don't you know that it vexes him beyond anything to see you so gloomy?"

"He has as good as said that I am jealous and mean-spirited, so I

can't see it much matters what else I am. I don't know how I am ever to bear his thinking so of me," said Hugh, gloomily enough. And then the dinner bell rang, and he had to follow Magda downstairs, after making a hasty and very imperfect attempt at washing his hands and putting his hair in order.

The dinner, which on that occasion in former times had been the merriest of the year, passed off very heavily. The Sergeant took no notice of Hugh's pale and Ratcliffe's sulky looks. He tried at first to draw them into conversation by speaking on subjects that ought to have interested them, and, when they responded badly, he turned to Beatrice and Magda, and found many pleasant things to say to them. Still it was impossible not to think how very different it had been the year before, when Cyril had made so many jokes, and the dear mother had found it difficult to moderate the laughter over them so as to give the dinner a chance of being eaten.

The general gloom could not but affect the Sergeant's way of imparting the news, which he had reserved for a *bonne bouche* after dinner. He expected that all the children would be overjoyed at the prospect of going to live in the country, and he meant to announce the intended change to them as a great piece of good fortune; but somehow the sight of the grave faces around him made him speak gravely—he found himself dwelling more on the reasons that had determined him on removing his family from London than on the pleasures and benefits they might all expect to enjoy in their new home. His little speech sounded more like a lecture on the general family failings than an announcement of pleasant intelligence, and the children heard it almost in silence. If they had not been somewhat overawed by their father's manner, his last remark would have been received with a clamour of discontent. He ended his account of the new plans by telling them that he had, with a great deal of difficulty, persuaded Magda's and Kathleen's kind friend, Mademoiselle Lakerstrom, to accompany them into Wales, and, what was still better, that Mr. Ward, whose failing health would oblige him to resign his mastership in the school, had consented to become tutor to the boys, and would probably for the present live with them at Rhos-y-Gaer—so the new house was called.

"An extraordinary advantage it will be to you boys to have the undivided attention of such a man," the Sergeant concluded. "I have

arranged that your cousins, the Mannerings, shall share it with you, and I hope you will all do your utmost to show that you appreciate his condescension in giving up his valuable time to you. Well, have none of you anything to say? Do you not approve of your new prospects? I expected you would be all wild with excitement, and you don't look the least bit surprised even. What has come to you, Ratty? I thought you, at least, would be overjoyed to escape from London and King's School to country freedom. There is plenty of space round Rhos-y-Gaer for you to roam about; and I have had gardens laid out for each of you near the house, and there will be two ponies for you to share between you. I think you will be very happy."

Magda and Kathleen here managed to put in a word or two of thanks for their father's kindness in thinking of the gardens, and Hugh and Tommy asked a question or two which led to a more detailed description of Rhos-y-Gaer.

It was an old-fashioned curiously-built house, full of odd corners and staircases and hiding-places. It had been a fortified castle in old times; and though the greater part of it had been pulled down and built up again in more modern fashion, it was still sufficiently unlike their London experience of houses to be certain to strike them strangely at first. Tommy and Kathleen's spirits rose as they listened, and Magda began to reproach herself for feeling disappointed at the prospect of having Mademoiselle with them, for whom she had till lately professed great affection; yet it cannot be denied that the long-expected announcement fell very flat, and was felt by all the children to be a terrible downfall to the daydreams in which they had lately been indulging. Ratcliffe relieved himself with an awful groan as soon as they left the dining-room.

"A pretty catastrophe yours turns out to be, Miss Magda. The advantage of having old Ward jawing at one from morning to night, indeed! I just wish my father could try how he would like it himself: and I only hope Harry Mannering will appreciate his share. There will perhaps be some consolation in greening him. Won't I put him up to old Ward's ways—my word?"

[*To be continued.*]

THE PRINCE OF SLEONA.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LORD OF THE BLACK CASTLE. THE THREE GUIDES.

WHEN the prince awoke after a long and profound slumber, it was night. He opened his eyes languidly, but at first they failed to notice anything, all thought and sensation being merged in a vague sense of blessed rest, tranquillity, and security. He was still so far under the influence of fatigue, and so little awake, that he did not understand where he was, having, for the time, forgotten all about the Black Castle, and his recent struggles and adventures. He closed his eyes again, and stretched his limbs in a new attitude of rest upon his soft divan. The gentle plash of the fountain, falling into its basin in jets of spray, was the only sound to break the silence. He had almost slept again, when suddenly the thought that he was actually within the Black Castle flashed upon his mind, and he aroused himself and looked about him with eager curiosity.

He found that he was in a spacious hall of black marble. Besides the divans which partly surrounded it, it contained nothing but some antique ebony furniture, and near the fountain there were ranged certain low trees of graceful forms, bearing large white flowers of an elongated bell shape. Silver lamps, like those on the staircase, shed a soft, unwavering light, and at the further end of the room upon the wall the inscription "Aum. Mane. Padme. Aum." shone in letters of pale fire. The prince's half-wandering attention was at once arrested by the strange and beautiful effect of this inscription, formed of a flame which differed in colour and intensity from that of the lamps; it was at once softer and brighter, and it shimmered and sparkled, and seemed to dance and play, more like the waters of the fountain than like ordinary flame.

Withdrawing his eyes from these letters, he found that the Lord of the Black Castle himself was standing by his feet, gazing upon him

motionless and in silence ; and upon the face of this powerful adept his glance at once became riveted. It was a pale beautiful face, with most harmonious features—clear cut, noble, and expressive of great and concentrated intellectual power. The somewhat scanty hair, soft and silvery, told of age, but the brow was scarcely marked by time, and the extraordinarily bright and piercing eyes indicated an organization of surpassing vigour. No beard concealed the pure lines of the chin and lower portion of the face, though the delicate lips were fringed with a light and silvery growth. The eyes riveted the gaze ; they seemed to look into the inner depths of the prince's being. The whole expression of his face, though grave, and even sad, was benevolent and kind. He was simply dressed, entirely in black, his only ornaments being a large diamond clasp which fastened his garment over the left breast, and a great ring of some shining jewel on the right forefinger.

The prince would have risen to salute him, but he motioned him to remain as he was, and seated himself on the divan at his feet.

"You have need of rest," he said, "and it is unnecessary that you should further fatigue yourself by conversing. All that you would say is known to me, and I will speak to you of the future."

Loroio observed, with some astonishment, that he spoke to him in his own language, pronouncing it with the utmost correctness, and employing it with fluency and ease.

"I have waited for and desired your coming," he went on, "for reasons which have been made known to you. You have met with obstacles and perils in your journey, but they were not placed in your path without cause. It was necessary, in the first place, to put your resolution and perseverance to the proof. Moreover, I am constrained so to order matters that it shall be rendered an arduous task to gain access to this place ; for those who seek me must prove that they possess certain qualities ere they can find me. At times, when the poor and ignorant have set out to crave of me some simple boon, I have had pity on their need, and they have found the way to the castle plain before them, and have been sent away rejoicing. But, more often, those who have come in search of me have set out, attracted by that reputation which has sprung from the knowledge which I have gained, to ask my aid in matters of another kind—thinking that I can interfere with the course of nature and destiny—deprive sin of its punishment or produce results without

the operation of their due causes. To such the path is barred. In your case, certain obstacles had to be overcome, as, in some sense, a preliminary discipline. For there is a great destiny before you, though, as in every instance, it rests mainly with yourself to work it out. Since you have entered upon the right path, you have done well in the main, though you did wrong to abandon yourself to despair this morning at the torrent-gorge. By so doing you gave to the Djên of Night once more a hold upon you, and it required an active intervention of the powers of Light to snatch you from their grasp.

“You have now to find the tree, and this you must do without my aid; though there will be guides to point out your way, if you will heed them. Should you wish to rest here for a time before prosecuting your search, do so. I do not doubt, however, that you will be eager to begin the work without delay. You must labour constantly and assiduously at tending and cultivating the tree. The task once begun must never be laid aside, or intermitted, till success crowns your efforts. This main object of your life must be kept at all times steadily in view; and you must not allow weariness or disinclination at any time to turn you aside, or lead you to relax in your efforts. Thus, with the exception of the one day in seven which, even for physical reasons, it is essential to observe as a day of rest, the sun must never set without something having been done. On some days, naturally, less may be accomplished than on others, but none must be suffered to pass without its work, be it little or much. You will, indeed, meet with small temptation to neglect your labours; you will be far from your fellow men, and from the whirl of their pursuits. Yet you will not be in absolute solitude, since in the temple on the island where the tree grows there lives an old hermit, who long years since abandoned a busy worldly life, to pass the remainder of his days in reading and meditation; and in the temple itself there is a collection of manuscripts which, diligently studied in your leisure hours, will teach you much that will be of inestimable service to you in your future career.

“Should success attend your labours, the tree will produce nine of its blossoms every month. Three of them you will eat, when they arrive at maturity; the other six you must carefully gather and preserve, sending them to me as opportunities offer. This is the condition, and the only one, which I make. By fulfilling it, you will be carrying out good ends which I have in view, and which are of im-

portance also to yourself, although I do not at present explain to you in what manner.

“And now, though I may not give you explicit directions as to the paths you must follow to reach the tree,—since, to be successful, you must yourself be the main instrument in its discovery,—it is permitted me to throw some rays of light upon your way, and I will help you thus as far as lies in my power.”

He took from his bosom a small crystal flask, containing a pure, colourless liquid, which sparkled and shone like some fluid jewel, and, making the prince hold out his left hand horizontally, he poured a little of this liquid into his palm, desiring him to look stedfastly into it, fixing his whole attention upon it, and keeping his mind free from disturbing thoughts. The prince obeyed. Soon light fumes arose from it, of a penetrating, delicious odour, and, as he gazed at it, it seemed to swell and increase marvellously in circumference and depth.

“Describe what you see,” said the lord of the Black Castle.

“I see waves and wreaths, like mist and cloud, rolling and eddying in the liquid.”

“Continue to look.”

“The liquid seems to swell and grow. The clouds are rolling away, and leaving a clear space in the centre. I see a beautiful deer, of a golden brown, spotted with white. He pauses midway, and gazes at me. Now he passes on—he is gone.”

“Remember the spotted deer,” said the adept. “Look still.”

“The clouds close again; they eddy and whirl. Again they clear away. I see a barren plain, flat and bare. There is a pigeon circling above, a pure white pigeon. He turns, and flies straight away into the distance with a rapid flight. Further and further, smaller and smaller—he is gone!”

“Remember the white dove,” said the adept. “Continue to look.”

“I see a thick forest, lonely and still. Ha! there is a moving point of brilliant greenish light, but it darts hither and thither so rapidly that I cannot tell what it is. I feel chilled and cold.” And the prince shivered as if a freezing air had breathed upon him.

The adept scattered a few grains of some powder into the fountain, which immediately leaped up higher, and glowed and glittered as if with an inner light. At the same moment, the flame which formed the letters of the mystic inscription on the wall changed its colour, and

shone with tenfold splendour, causing the light of the lamps to seem pale and dim. The fluid in the prince's palm became violently agitated: it boiled and bubbled, and gave out dense violet fumes of a ravishing odour. As they cleared away, the adept once more said, "Describe what you see."

"I see," said the prince, "a bowery island, on a lonely lake; the lotos flowers on the lake, and, peeping above a thicket of trees of varied foliage, I see the roof of a small temple. On the shore of the lake there is an ancient tomb, with a small open space cleared around it. On the borders of the open space, the trees are the most beautiful in the island, and—but it is fading rapidly—it is all but lost. Ah! it has vanished."

Indeed, the liquid had entirely evaporated, leaving not a trace in his palm; as it did so, the fountain and the mystic inscription instantaneously reverted to their former condition.

"It is enough, my son," said the lord of the Black Castle. "When next your eyes rest upon that scene, you will have reached the field of your labours. There grows the tree, and there you will work out, aided by Heaven, your own deliverance and restoration, and much besides."

He stretched his hand towards the prince and, fixing his penetrating gaze upon him, pronounced the word "Rest!" in a voice of wonderful softness and kindness. The prince sank at once into a profound slumber, an expression of intense and tranquil happiness beaming upon his face. The adept gazed for a time with compassionate interest and affection upon his wasted, beautiful features.

"Poor boy!" he said. "May your troubles be now well-nigh done. For you the tree will produce its blossoms. Ah! Had *I* your youth, your purity, your years to come, what might I not accomplish? And yet I have done much—much, but how little!"

And with a slow step and a melancholy air the powerful lord of the Black Castle paced slowly out of the hall.

Loroio slept his charmed sleep. The night wore away, the dawn reddened the east, the light of the coming day brightened, the sun rose, and as its first rays shone upon the earth the flame of the inscription on the wall went out, as did the lamps of the hall. But still he slept on. The sun rose high in the heavens, and declined again in the west, but still the prince lay in deep slumber. Night came again; the lamps

and the inscription gave out their light as before. And at length, with a long sigh, Loroio awoke.

A black slave, having on a collar and armlets of silver, graven with mystic characters, was standing near him, his arms folded upon his breast, his head bowed in an attitude of submission. When he perceived that Loroio was awake, he approached him with a reverence, handing him a letter from the lord of the castle, which contained merely a few lines, recommending him to depart in search of the tree as soon as he felt sufficiently restored by repose, and as a parting counsel directing him to prosecute his journey towards the East.

When he had read this letter, Loroio addressed the slave, asking of him how long he had slept; but the slave gave him to understand by means of signs that he was deaf and dumb, and, after pointing out a repast which was laid out in an adjoining apartment, he retired with another lowly reverence.

After partaking of the food and wine, of which he stood in need, and thinking over the wonderful events which had so recently befallen him, Loroio, determining to prosecute his journey on the following morning, sought repose once more.

CHAPTER V.

LOROIO'S JOURNEY TO THE MARVELLOUS TREE.

AT dawn Loroio arose, and, after a somewhat hasty repast, he cast a farewell glance round the hall, left it, and descended the staircase, the doors of rock swinging open before him as they had done at his entrance.

From the comparative elevation on which he was standing, he overlooked a beautiful country, well wooded, with open glades between the trees. The sun was rising, indicating to him the easterly direction which he was to follow.

He set out at once, feeling light-hearted and confident of success, and had proceeded for some distance when, becoming somewhat uncertain as to his route, since the thickness of the forest made it difficult for him to steer by the sun, he sat down to deliberate on the point. Seeing, however, the edges of an open glade at no great distance, he made for the spot, hoping to see the sun from thence. In the centre of the glade he saw a beautiful deer, of a golden brown colour spotted with white, quietly feeding. As he advanced, the animal lifted his elegant



PRINCE LOROIO AND THE DEER.

head, which was crowned with branching antlers, and, after gazing at Loroio earnestly with his large beautiful eyes, passed on across the glade into the thicker forest. The prince remembered and recognised this creature as the deer of which he had been shown the form in the magic liquid, and took the direction in which the animal had moved away. The deer, looking back from time to time, as if to see whether or no he were followed, went gently and quietly on. When he came to any comparatively open space he would frisk and play in the most graceful and charming manner, but whenever the forest became thicker he would move on slowly, so that it was easy to keep him in sight. And Loroio found that the animal conducted him by brooks of the clearest water, and to trees bearing fruits and nuts, some of which he ate, finding them pleasant to the taste and refreshing. But, on one or two occasions, when he was about to partake of certain berries of bright colour and attractive appearance, the deer bounded on so rapidly before him that he was compelled to leave them untouched in order to keep him in sight, and he concluded that those berries were not proper to be eaten, and that the deer withdrew him from them on purpose to prevent his tasting them.

Towards evening they arrived at a beautiful and sheltered spot, near the outskirts of the forest, on the banks of a stream—a glade, surrounded by thick and spreading trees. Here the deer paused, and on Loroio's approach the animal knelt before him, gazing into his face with his great soft eyes, and seeming to say by his attitude and gestures almost as plainly as if he had uttered his meaning in words, "Your servant has done his office, and has led you through the forest by safe and pleasant paths. Are you content?" The prince caressed him, saying, "I am indeed content, beautiful creature;" and the deer's eyes shone with pleasure, as Loroio smoothed his soft coat, stroked his ears, and passed his hand over his antlers. And presently, going to the edge of the wood, the deer began to scrape and collect together a quantity of leaves and soft branches to form a bed. And in this occupation Loroio assisted him to his evident delight. Ultimately they lay down together to pass the night upon this fragrant couch, and the deer lay with his head resting upon the prince as a favoured and favourite dog might have done.

In the morning the animal accompanied him as he passed out from the forest into the open country, and seemed loth to leave him. But

when they had left the forest some considerable distance behind them the deer paused at length, and, looking back towards the trees, he knelt once more before the prince with looks of sorrow. And Loroio, seeing that they must part, embraced him and kissed him, bidding him farewell. Then the deer slowly took his way back to the woods, often pausing and gazing after Loroio till he was lost to sight.

Our hero now entered upon a great sandy plain which stretched to the horizon, broken only by low sandhills. Its only vegetation consisted of scanty tufts of greyish plants growing at rare intervals. As the day wore on the heat of the sun became intense and oppressive, and he suffered from thirst. Several times his eyes were gladdened by the sight of blue lakes in the distance, lying calm and cool in the hollows, with wooded islands whose trees were reflected in their still waters; and he would push on to reach them. But when he arrived at the spots where the lakes had seemed to be, they had disappeared. They were only creations of the deceiving mirage common in such places. The wooded islands resolved themselves into the scattered tufts of grey plants, but a few inches in height, which formed the vegetation. And when he looked back at the country over which he had passed in the earlier hours of the day, he perceived that the mirage had decked it also, in the same manner, with sheets of water fringed by trees; and had transformed low sandhills into the likeness of lofty craggy mountains, or cliffs rising precipitously from the sides of winding rivers. Still there was nothing for it but to persevere with the journey, although his thirst increased and became hard to bear. He tried the effect of sucking some of the grey-leaved plants, but they were salt to the taste, and only increased his thirst.

He had not reached any water when night fell, and as the last light of day had not enabled him to see anything other than the sandy desert stretching around him on all sides, he could but make up his mind to pass the night where he was, on the bare sand. The sky was shrouded in clouds and lightning played all round the horizon, while distant thunder muttered and rolled. His sleep was broken and uneasy. He had dreams—of glorious rivers, which he saw, but could not reach, and of feasts, where cold and sparkling wines were poured out for him into goblets which shivered to fragments ere he could raise them to his lips. In the morning he resumed his journey, but his tongue was parched, and his head was dizzy. Soon his senses began to waver. At

times he thought he heard a chime of distant bells, but they were ringing the melody of a well-known song—ringing it, however, in a strange, distorted manner, quick where it ought to be slow, so that it sounded distressing and intolerable. Then he fancied he was addressed by voices, some familiar, others strange to him, and he would partially awaken to consciousness in the act of answering, he scarce knew what, to questions which he no longer remembered. Shadowy films and bright specks of light swam and darted before his eyes, and his limbs felt at the same time distressingly light and painfully heavy and cumbrous. He had lost all power of steering his course by the sun, and could only plod mechanically on, stumbling often as he walked. In a moment of partially restored consciousness it struck him that, as he saw his shadow thrown on the sand before him, he must have turned round in his course so as to be going westward instead of eastward. So he paused in a puzzled manner to try to resolve this problem, and, looking up towards the sun, he saw, among the glittering specks which seemed to fill the sky, one larger and steadier than the others; whereas the others all danced and scintillated in every direction, *this* particular one was steadily though rapidly sweeping in wide circles.

A sudden thought struck him, under the influence of which his bewildered brain became clear and steady for the time. He saw at once that this was a white dove, flying in circles at a considerable height.

Remembering immediately the white dove which he had seen in the magic liquid, he collected all his energies by a great effort, and fixed his eyes upon the bird with renewed hope.

She did as she had done in the vision. After circling for a time, she flew off steadily in a straight line, as if she had caught sight of some object which she had been looking to find. Loroio followed her. She flew rapidly for a short distance, but soon alighted on the ground; and the necessity of keeping her in sight acted as a miraculous stimulus upon his flagging energies, so that he managed to follow her, though with some difficulty. She continued to take short flights in advance of him, always alighting when she had gone a short way, and waiting, as it seemed, until he should approach. At length she rose higher into the air, and sped off at once in a straight line, pausing no more, and soon disappearing. But now Loroio could plainly make out a belt of trees in the distance, in the direction in which she had disappeared;

and, keeping them steadily in sight, he made for them with the last efforts of his nearly expended strength. When he reached them, he found that they overshadowed a swiftly-running stream, and in this he quenched his thirst. Being now almost himself again, although much exhausted, he determined to rest by the stream for the remainder of the day, and to continue his journey in the morning, when he should be invigorated by a night's repose; for he did not then feel equal to any further exertion.

But before long he saw a small boat approaching him. A little old man was sitting in it, and steering it with a paddle, as it came easily down stream with the current. Two long-necked white birds, with red bills and legs, kept darting from its prow into the water, and immediately returning, each with a fish invariably in its bill, which it deposited in the boat. As soon as he perceived Loroio, the little old man, who had a long white beard, and wore the costume of a priest, whistled to the birds, who at once perched on the bow, to which he fastened them by means of light chains and collars going round their necks. He then put the boat's head to the bank, and stepped nimbly out, saluting Loroio as he landed.

"You are most welcome," he said, in a cheerful and kindly voice. "When the white pigeon came in this afternoon I knew you were at hand, and, thinking you would strike the stream about this point, I came to meet you, though I have been higher up, for I had brought these birds that they might catch us a dish of fish, and there are some pools further up where the blue fish are finer than they are just here. But pray come on board; you can lie down at your ease in the boat, and we will drift quietly home. You are scarcely more than half alive, after crossing the desert and thirsting for a day and a night. We will soon reach the island, and there you will refresh yourself, and rest in peace."

So Loroio, woefully fatigued, and scarcely able to hold up his head, was kindly assisted by his new acquaintance to get into the boat, and there he lay down on a pile of soft mats in the stern. Without further conversation they floated gently down. Before long the banks opened out, and they entered upon a placid lake. It was nearly dark, but Loroio recognised the well-remembered outlines of the island which he had seen in the liquid in his palm. The boat ran into a little sheltered cove, where myriads of fire flies were playing among the dark recesses

of the overhanging trees. The birds were unchained and landed, and Loroio and the priest slowly ascended a sloping and winding path, which conducted them to the temple.

Though the prince was too tired to talk, he could not refrain from the one question which was uppermost in his thoughts :

“ And the tree ? ”

“ The tree is by the old tomb, of which you can just see the pillar, there by the lake. But think no more of it now. To-morrow you will see it, and can begin your work. To-night you must have food and rest.”

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ISLAND.

As it sometimes happens, Loroio was this night too thoroughly fatigued to sleep very soundly. On such occasions, you begin by going off to sleep at once, but, after a time, about the middle of the night, you wake completely up, and find it impracticable to sleep any more. Then you wonder why this should be ; you are very tired in body, and your one desire and wish is to sleep, because you feel that, in the first place, it is the best thing for you, and in the second, that it is the only possible way of getting through the time which has yet to elapse before daylight. And this intervening time is doubly difficult to get through otherwise than in sleep, if it happens that you are anxiously looking forward to the coming of the day, which is to enable you to do or to see something which you have for some time been eagerly expecting to do or to see. Therefore, the chances are you try some of the many methods which you have heard recommended for procuring sleep under similar circumstances ; you begin to count a thousand, let us say. I never knew of anyone who got beyond two hundred or so ; for when you get as far as that you are apt to forget whether it is *two* hundred or *three* hundred which you have arrived at, and the fifties, sixties, and seventies become sources of trouble ; then, also, you find yourself saying “ seventy, eight, nine, ten, eleven,” and bring up, in a state of bewilderment, when you have got to “ thirteen,” but, at the same time, you perceive that you are more wide awake than when you began. So you give the plan up, and turn round upon your other side, getting your head upon a fresh cool part of the pillow,

and, just at first, you feel convinced that you are going to sleep at once. So you divest your mind, as far as you can, of every approach to a thought, and lie quite still. But, somehow, your eyes come wide open, and you find yourself staring into the darkness, more hopelessly wide awake than ever. Then, if you are in a place where there are mosquitoes (as is the case nearly everywhere out of England), you hear one shrilly trumpeting somewhere in the far distance, and you listen to his trumpet with deeply interested and attentive ear. At first it is very faint and far away, but it nears you rapidly, and with unerring certainty; beautifully gradual is the *crescendo*, but it very soon comes to an end, as, with a sharp whizz of satisfaction, the performer alights, his trumpeting ceasing as he begins his bloodthirsty work. Your vicious claps through the darkness miss the tormentor, but rouse yourself into a state of more alert wakefulness than ever. Thus does the night pass away, until, at length, when the day has fairly dawned, so that you can distinguish objects in your room, and when, in all probability, the time has come to get up, and set about what you have got to do, the sleep, which has eluded you all night, comes down upon you like a thick cloud, and you remain buried in oblivion for hours.

Loroio, however, did not yield to the morning sleep which might have overpowered him after his wakeful night. He was far too anxious to see the tree, which he had come in search of, and to reach which he had endured so much. So he arose with the sun, went out, and passed by dewy lawns, where golden pheasants were early astir, picking up insects, and rejoicing in the morning light; where the flowers were opening, and a chorus of birds saluted the rising day as he reached the ancient tomb of the mighty philosopher, near to which he knew that the tree was to be found.

The tomb, moss-grown and grey, bore inscriptions in seven languages, none of which he could read (though he recognised, among the others, the Tama priest's language), and the "Aum. Mane. Padme. Aum." was sculptured on a great raised triangle, surrounded by a circle. The tomb stood upon a low eminence, which was laved by the waters of the lake, here covered with the flowering lotos. The trees near it, the finest in the island, rose high in air, but none grew within a certain distance of it. Thus a clear open space surrounded it. There was a profound stillness at the spot. Around and

about the tomb the lily and the ivy grew plentifully, and were glistening with the dew, which also hung in minute and pearly drops on a thousand webs of spiders, indicating their every thread, and bringing into relief their intricate, delicate network. No birds sang near the tomb, but from a covert at some distance rose the clear and melodious note of one of a species unknown to Loroio. The lake lay calm and clear, like a mirror; there was no air stirring, and the lotos flowers and the long reeds and grasses by the edge were reflected in the motionless water. A divine freshness and purity pervaded the sacred stillness of the spot, and the song of the distant bird served to deepen the repose which reigned around the old tomb.

And the tree? Could that thing at the foot of the tomb be the wonderful Tree of Healing?

It appeared to be nothing more nor less than a grey, dead stick! Not a vestige of life or growth about it; not the trace of a leaf, or even a bud. Little more than a shrub, it had neither height, thickness, nor symmetry. One would have disdained to cut it down for the purpose of including it in a fagot of firewood.

Yet there was about the entire scene a something which seemed to suggest that it only wanted, to render it complete, the revival of this dead remnant of a tree, and the clothing of it with branches and leaves. And as Loroio was thinking thus the hermit joined him.

"You do not look hopefully at the tree now that you have reached it," he said. "Yet I do not doubt that a few weeks, more or less, of your labour, properly directed, will clothe that trunk, lifeless though it seems to be, with luxuriant beauty. You do not know, as yet, what labour can accomplish. There is no more mighty thing in this world, believe me, than labour. The truest and clearest thinkers may think and go on thinking, but what are their thoughts worth till they are put in practice?"

"When you have learned, by experience, what the manifold glories of labour truly are, I will talk further with you on the subject; but to do so now were to waste the precious time. Begin at once. As to what you have to do here, I have, in the temple yonder, the manuscript written by the last successful cultivator of this grand tree, which you shall read and study at your leisure. But in the meantime begin, this very day, this very hour. There is no mystery about the matter. All that is needed is regular, patient, steady labour, and the application

of natural aid, quite easy to find, ready to your hand. You perceive, I have kept the ground clear all round the tree so that you can set about your task immediately. And of all things to be borne in mind at all times, by all men, this is surely one of the most important: when a man sees what his work is, let him set at it instantly; if he do not, there is every probability that the proper time to do it will be gone by—the chance lost—the difficulties increased—who can say to what extent? Therefore, to work! In the temple there you will find a spade and a small pick. Get them, and begin. All you have to do, at first, is to turn up the earth, carefully and diligently, all round the tree in every direction, untiringly, every day, and to water it plentifully with water from the lake morning and evening.”

So Loroio, after gazing at the grey stump for a time, and thinking, with a new feeling dimly rising in his mind, what a strangely misspent life his own would probably prove to have been hitherto, went and got the spade and the pick from the temple, and began to dig up the ground. The earth was dry, and almost as hard as rock, and required the constant use of the pick; the work was laborious, and not in itself interesting, and he was not in the least accustomed to it, and was clumsy about it, besides being weak, and feeling worse than usual in health, as well he might, after all that he had lately gone through. So when the evening came, and he gave the soil its first watering from the lake, he had accomplished very little. Yet he experienced an immense satisfaction as he reflected that his task was now really commenced. It was a great comfort to think that now he was actually employed in an undertaking of which the results, though distant and problematical as yet, would, in the end, be of such importance.

And, as the days passed, he began to like the work for the work's sake! The soil, loosened and softened by his labour, daily became easier to turn and dig, and ere long the tree began to exhibit some faint signs of life. The grey, hard bark seemed to become, by imperceptible degrees, brighter in tint and smoother to the touch, and at length, one morning, he found an unmistakable bud just breaking through it. This precious bud was quickly succeeded by many others, and, after about three weeks' labour, young branches were shooting out from the trunk in all directions.

A. E.

[*To be continued.*]

PRINCE BOOHOO AND THE GLASS CASE.

PRINCE BOOHOO was the only son of King Starzungarturz and Queen Kizzimforwotteveredid. So you may be sure that he was a great favourite with the court and nation.

Indeed he had only one fault. That was a habit of eating too much between meals, talking with his mouth full, spilling his egg, interrupting the king's friends when they tried to chat over their wine after dinner, crying for anything he could not get directly, telling lies, and teasing the kitten. In all other respects he spoke the truth and behaved like a gentleman. Every morning, exactly at ten o'clock, Professor Nevverbocksisears came to the palace to give the prince his lessons. Last half he made such remarkable progress as to spell words of one letter, and count. When the professor made his report and laid the examination papers before the king, his majesty was so much pleased as to make the professor an inspector of nuisances on the spot, and give the prince six months' holidays.

But I am not going to tell you about the attention shown by the prince to his studies, though they made a great noise in the papers for a long time, which is a sure sign that he was very clever and industrious. I only want to tell you how it came about that he had to take a powder, and was cured of his faults ever after.

On Tuesday morning he was playing in the queen's dressing-room, and cutting acts of parliament to pieces with a pair of golden scissors. His mamma, the queen, was combing out her back hair, and had just rung the bell for the prime minister to tell the cook to come up for orders, for she never went into the kitchen as the queen did whom Gammer Gurton tells us about. It would have been low, she thought, and what the French newspapers call "infra-dig," to do so. Well, the queen was combing her back hair, and looking at the ends (which were split), and the prince was clipping at a Reform Bill with a pair of his mamma's gold scissors, when the king came in with his slippers on and his crown quite awry. Now this was a bad sign. When the people saw him looking out of the palace window with his crown awry, they, in the language of the masters of the Trinity House, whom you will

read about by-and-by in the *Times*, though I may as well tell you at once that they are judges in blue jackets and straw hats, "looked out for squalls." Whenever the people saw the king leaning out of the palace window with his crown awry, they knew that the government meant business, and so they ran off, just as boys do after a fire-engine, and added up their accounts, and paid their income tax, and signed their wills, and shook hands, and forgave their friends, and made things pleasant.

When the queen saw the king come in thus, she laid her comb down and began to cry, for he used to play the dickens There now, that will do. I am not going to tell you anything of the inside of a palace, whatever I know, for little boys and girls know better.

Well, the king came in with his crown awry, and said that Mr. McPherson, the head gardener, had given warning because of something the prince had said. "Now," added his majesty solemnly, for he was a very serious king, "I am supreme everywhere in my own dominions, except in the garden. I can order what I please in the army and the navy and the two houses of parliament, but I never could pick a flower in my garden with comfort till Mr. McPherson came; so I want to know, Boohoo, what you have done to make him give warning."

Then the prince began to cry, and said, "I only asked him, papa, to make the strawberries grow all the year round, and he told me he couldn't."

"This is too bad," replied the king, and he rang the bell, and ordered all the gardeners' heads to be cut off as soon as they had sent in the vegetables for dinner. Then he put his crown straight on his head, and walked out of the room in quite a good humour. I must say that whenever the king was angry it did not last long; and I hope that when you are in a passion, and do just as you please with people, you won't give way to your temper; it isn't nice, and, what is more, it does not look well.

When the gardener's head was cut off, the king sat down in his study, and sent an advertisement to the newspapers for another. It was there this morning. I saw it. I wonder whether you can find out which it is. Then the king wiped his pen on his coat tails, and walked out of the front door to smoke a pipe.

And what do you think he saw? The smallest, driest old woman you ever met, sitting on the scraper, and leaning her chin on a little black stick. She was, of course, dressed in a red cloak, and a high sugarloaf hat, and wore high-heeled shoes with buckles in them, and had three hairs on the tip of her nose. ‘

“I know what you want,” she said, in a thin grating voice, like the noise of scraping a slate pencil. “You want a gardener who can make strawberries grow all the year round.”

The king was so surprised that he held the lucifer match he was just going to light his pipe with till it burnt his fingers.

Then he threw it down, and said, “Yes, I do.”

And the fairy—for it was a fairy, as you know, in the shape of an old woman—replied, “Bring the prince into the middle of the strawberry beds to-morrow morning, at eleven o’clock; he shall then have what he wants; only remember this—he will have to stay in the garden for exactly twelve months.”

Then she winked at him and changed into a soap bubble, and floated away.

After the fairy had gone, the king lit another lucifer and smoked his pipe. The band played while he did so, and a number of policemen kept the crowd off.

Now it happened that Prince Boohoo heard what the fairy said. He was hidden behind the hall door, waiting for the man to come from the pastrycook’s with some tarts which had been ordered for dinner, and a few of which he hoped to get before the servants could answer the area bell. And so he followed the king into his study, and begged that he might be allowed to stay in the garden for twelve months, as the fairy had proposed.

And he cried so long and so loud that at last the king said he might do as he pleased. Once having said this he was afraid to go back, although the queen kept him awake nearly all night talking about the things that might happen to the prince if he stayed out too long in the garden. He might, she said, be frozen to death and catch cold; or have a sunstroke and spoil his complexion; or stand about in the rain without his hat, and so get his feet wet.

At last the king went to sleep, and the queen went to sleep, and there was not a sound in the palace beyond the ticking of their two watches in the watch pockets over their heads, and the distant

snoring of the chancellor of the exchequer, who slept in the pantry to take care of the spoons, and who just then had a cold in his head.

Next morning the groom of the chamber, who brought the hot water and put out a clean crown for the king, was desired to order breakfast half an hour sooner than usual. I should tell you that the king always boiled his eggs himself over a spirit lamp in a golden saucepan for 4 m. 10 s. Herein he showed his wisdom, for there is reason in the boiling of eggs as well as in the roasting of them. But this morning after he had put them into the saucepan he forgot all about them directly. Then he put the sugar into the teapot and the salt into the creamjug, and cut a slice off the teacaddy, and buttered the newspaper, and tried to read a piece of toast. Whereby you may perceive that he was rather absent; in fact, he was thinking about the fairy and eleven o'clock.

N.B.—The eggs are boiling still.

At last he picked his teeth (but not with the new patent antitartar-andcaries tooth-pick that had lately been presented to him by the Linnean Society in a gold box, for it hurt him), looked at his watch, rang the bell, and desired the grand master of the waterbutt to request H.R.H. the Prince Boohoo to come in.

The prince was well behaved that morning.

It was now half-past ten o'clock, and he had not been very naughty more than three times. Indeed he had been so good as to propose going to the window himself and nodding into the street. This made him deservedly popular. Hundreds of people immediately laid down their work and ran to the place in order to hurrah. Having begun thus, many made a day of it, and enjoyed themselves in the public houses adjoining the palace till nightfall. I am sorry to say that some of them got drunk; but I am assured by the public analyzers of food and the Mendicity Society that this arose not from their drinking too much, but from the adulteration of their beer. They were too enlightened to get tipsy on good liquor.

Well, the king rang his bell, and the grand master of the waterbutt brought in the prince, who kicked his shins on the doormat outside, which, as he was obliged to wear shorts and silk stockings, made the grand master's ears red. However, he was too well bred to say what he thought, so he made a number of bows, and backed out of the room,

and then ran to the chemist's shop round the corner for a yard of diachylon plaster as fast as he could.

Meanwhile the king took the prince into the garden in order to meet the fairy who had promised strawberries all the year round. But when they got there they could see or hear nothing of her.

"Perhaps her watch is slow," says the king; "it wants only half-a-minute to eleven by mine." He had no sooner said this than the prince cried out, "Look, papa! what a beautiful bubble there is over our heads! and how big it gets!"

Of course this was the fairy. She had sat on the horn of the moon with her watch in her hand till 10 h. 59 m. 59 s. A.M. Then she tucked her petticoats about her and slid off, arriving at the garden by eleven o'clock. This gives an average speed of — miles an hour (take a slate and work out the result, or write to the editor of the *Family Herald*).

But she did not come pop down like a rocket-stick. She brought with her a large glass case made like a beehive, with a little round hole at the top. It was this that the prince took for a soap bubble. When she got about one hundred yards off, she called to the king to get out of the way, and then suddenly put the glass case over the prince and the strawberry beds, just as you do a tumbler over a wasp that has settled down upon a plum on the tablecloth.

Then she sat down on the top of the glass case, and took a cold sun out of her pocket, and screwed it into the hole, and lit it with a lucifer match, and went up into space like a spider.

At first the king and queen were terribly distressed and tried to get the prince out. But the glass was too strong to be broken.

The king ordered the director of the universal railway to run an express train against it at once; but the engine was smashed, and all the passengers were killed, and a great mess was made in the garden, and yet there was not so much as a crack in the glass case.

Then he tried to dig underneath the edge of it, but, however deep the miners got, they still found the glass case in the way, for the fairy had given it a little twist when she popped it over the prince, and so had screwed it many miles deep into the ground.

But the prince was wonderfully pleased. He ate strawberries till he was full up to his throat; and then he began again. And so he went on eating all that day and all that night, for the patent sun which the

fairy had screwed into the hole at the top of the glass case shone after the common one had set, and made it always noon in the garden.

When the prince had eaten strawberries for forty-eight hours, he found that he had had enough, and tried to go into the palace. But, no. There was the glass case all round him, bright, hard, and slippery.

It was, moreover, of no use for him to cry. Nobody could hear him, or get at him, or get him out.

The people and the court who stood round could see him, but that was all. They could see him stick his elbows out, wrinkle his face, and squeeze up his eyes, and open his mouth, but they could not hear a sound, nor help him in any way. Every time they saw him cry the prime minister made a bow, and the guard presented arms, but they could do no more.

Of course, when the news about the glass case became generally known, people came from all parts to see it. But the king would let none of them into the garden, because they cut their names on the trees and threw orange peel about the walks. So they had platforms made outside the palace wall and peeped over, for they thought they had a right to look at the royal family when they went out of doors.

But the prince could see better than he could hear. The case was made of magic glass—there is no use in your going to ask for any at the shops, for it was all bought up by the fairy—which enabled him to see what other children were doing all over the kingdom. He saw them at their lessons and their play. He saw them at their breakfasts, dinners, and suppers. He saw them getting up and going to bed. He saw them romping in the shade and sleeping in the dark. But all the while the patent sun kept on shining over his head, and he had nothing to do but eat strawberries.

And all the creeping things in the garden which like heat grew big and fat and saucy. The toads indeed backed into their holes, and the worms worked their way deep into the ground and then coiled themselves up in cool knots till such time as the sun should set and they could lay themselves out in the grass plat once more, but the ants, and the adders, and the spiders, and the wasps, grew bigger every day. Before a month was over the spiders were as large as pumpkins, and the stings of the wasps were as long as the steels which butchers hang round their waists. I need hardly tell you that the prince was much frightened at these, but he was more plagued by what he saw outside than by what

he saw inside the garden. For there the children went on enjoying themselves even after the strawberry season had passed. August came, and he saw some digging on the beach, and some bathing in the sea, and some riding on donkeys, while their papas and mammas looked through telescopes and read novels. And the children of people who were too poor to go to the sea-side gathered blackberries and played under the shade of great trees, while their fathers reaped the corn and their mothers gleaned in the field, and the farmers grumbled at the weather and the squires preserved their game.

And then autumn came with red and yellow leaves and cool evenings ; and the harvestmen shaved themselves and put on their Sunday clothes and sat at their harvest suppers, and sang songs and smoked long new clay pipes, and the children went nutting in the woods, and threw sticks and stones up into the walnut trees. And still the prince had nothing to eat but strawberries.

And winter came with slides, and snow-men, and holidays, and snapdragons, and pantomimes, and plum pudding, and forfeits, and cake. And all this while the sun on the top of the glass house kept on shining, and the prince had nothing to eat but strawberries.

When spring came he saw the children climb trees and go birdsnesting, and sow seeds and dig them up again, and gather wild flowers ; and still he had nothing to do but eat strawberries in the sunshine.

At last the 15th of July came round once more, on which day the fairy had put the glass case over him twelve months before.

You may be sure that the king and the queen and all the court, with a very great crowd who came by excursion trains from all parts of the country at reduced fares, stood round the garden.

And the fairy came too, for she was very punctual, just as the church clock was striking eleven.

But how do you think she let the prince out ? First she unscrewed the patent sun which she had fixed on the top of the glass case ; then she blew it out, and wiped it clean with her handkerchief, and put it in her pocket.

Then she touched the glass case with her little black stick, and it went away, puff, like a soap bubble, and there was nothing left but a little lather on the grass plat.

Then the queen caught the prince in her arms, and the king blew his nose with great feeling, and the prime minister bowed, and the

band played, and the ants and spiders grew little again, and the mob holloed, and Dr. Pilsandrux wrote a prescription.

But who was Dr. Pilsandrux?

He was physician in ordinary to the court. He saw in a moment that the prince wanted some physic, for his face was all spotted with red, and his head was full of strawberry jam, which had got into it instead of brains.

So he had to take a powder.

H. J.

SONG.

O MOON—said the children—O Moon, that shineth fair,
 Why do you stay so far away, so high above us there?
 O Moon, you must be very cold from shining on the sea;
 If you would come and play with us, how happy we should be!

O children—said the Moon—I shine above your head
 That I may light the ships at night when the sun has gone to bed;
 That I may show the beggar-boy his way across the moor,
 And bring the busy farmer home to his own cottage door.

O Moon—said the children—may we shine in your place?
 They say that I have sunny hair, and I a sparkling face.
 To light the ships and beggar-boys we greatly do desire;
 And you might come and warm yourself before the nurs'ry fire!

O children—said the Moon—we have each allotted parts:
 'Tis yours to shine by love divine on happy human hearts;
 'Tis mine to make the pathway bright of wanderers that roam;
 'Tis yours to scatter endless light on those that stay at home!

EDINEIN.

LITTLE AZURE BLUE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENISE," "MADEMOISELLE MORI," ETC.

IF ever you travel in Languedoc, do not fail to visit that lonely and dangerous peak, known in the country as La Montagne Noire, and rest a little while at the Mill of Croissac.

But how are you to know the Mill of Croissac? what is there in it particularly interesting? You may know it by the old mill itself; the dazzling little white cottage, or Mas, as they call such dwellings there; the tall cypresses, each casting its dark slender shadow on the ground; the old well so deep that to look into it is like looking into the depths of a mountain. It is all fringed with fern; the cold clear water lies far, far down—so far that it has to be drawn up by a horse which turns a mighty wheel, and raises a line of red earthenware jars all bright and dripping, that turn over and empty themselves into a tank beside the well. A reed bed grows tall and green near it, and the long leaves quiver when everything else is still. That well was made when the Arabs were masters of Languedoc. Wherever they went they constructed wells like this; you would find them in Spain, and Africa too. Near the mill is a threshing-floor made of cement, where oxen tread out the corn; a great deal has got into the cracks, and the chickens find employment all day long in picking it out. There is a straggling old fig tree near the house, and a jujubier waves its long elegant branches, covered with little green fruit, from which are made the jujubes that are so good for coughs; but there is nothing like what we in England call a garden, only a rose de Bengale, or China rose, grows luxuriantly near the house, with some white lilies beside it, and the miller's wife gathers them to make nosegays for the parish church, else her husband would probably have pulled them up, for the Languedociens do not care for flowers, and turn every inch of ground to what they think better uses.

Now you surely will know the Mill of Croissac when you see it; and look! the miller's wife comes to the door, and stands with her hand over her eyes, and her face turned towards the mill; she has her broad felt hat in her hand, but it is not worth while to put it on, for she is not

going out. She is Mos de Caylon : Mos is a title for the farmers' wives in these parts ; the poorer women are called simply by their names, but Mos is something between this familiarity and the title of madame, which is reserved for gentlefolks. Mos de Caylon is not expecting her husband, for he is busy at the well, but she wonders where her daughter is lingering instead of making haste back from the river, with her meek old donkey, laden with linen. She turns her head to speak to some one in the house, and now you are quite close and can ask her to let you go in and rest in the cool dark inner room. Mos de Caylon understands French. You have not travelled as far as La Montagne Noire without discovering that this is a rare accomplishment in Languedoc ; but do not call their dialect patois, for they claim it as a language older and finer than French. You must have read in French history of the two dialects, the langue d'oui and the langue d'oc, named from the word meaning 'yes' in each, which was spoken in the north and south of France. The former has gained the victory ; educated people speak it throughout France now, but the langue d'oc is alive for all that. The old grandmother whom you see when you enter, in the corner by the window, understands a few words of French, but cannot speak it, and if you address her she shakes her head in answer : " I do not talk that tongue ; my daughter-in-law comprehends it." She is spinning, like an old woman in a fairy tale, and her spindle is like the one which pierced the hand of the sleeping beauty. Her face is copper-coloured and all a network of wrinkles ; her little black eyes are almost hidden by puckers, for the burning sun of Languedoc dazzled her year after year while she was young enough to gather grapes and pick up olives and carry wood and oil to sell at the market town. That is all gone by now ; her son is very good to her, and she does not dislike her daughter-in-law ; and sits contentedly by the window in the room which serves as kitchen and parlour, quietly amused with all that goes on, but caring no longer to take an active part in it. If you could speak Languedocien you might rouse her and learn half the legends of the country ; she could tell you about the white women who visit every house on New Year's Eve, and Drac the wild spirit of the uplands, and St. Stapier, a saint whom nobody ever heard of out of Languedoc, but they believe in and venerate him there, and at the Mill of Croissac above all, for was it not through him that the Caylons got it years and years ago ? Perhaps Mos de Caylon may be persuaded to tell you the story, but



LITTLE AZURE BLUE.—THE TIRED BIRDCATCHER AND THE MONK.

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lest she should be too shy, or lest you should never visit La Montagne Noire, I will tell it myself. It is a real old French legend, no one knows how old:—

Once upon a time a poor birdcatcher was wandering along a stony, dangerous path up the Montagne Noire. His cloak was torn, his shoes were worn out, his knapsack was empty. He carried a number of cages tied together, but they were empty too, and he walked with the slow step of a tired man who has lost heart, and hardly cares to reach his journey's end. Otherwise he would have been afraid to linger so late on the Montagne Noire, where witches and wizards had their headquarters, and all manner of evil spirits reside. That day, and many before it, he had not sold a bird or a cage; indeed the birds seemed to have fled out of the land, and the inhabitants would have been glad to do the same if they could, war and famine were so sore in it. He walked slower and slower, and at last he sat down, and looked from the mountain side far away across the country, where the sun was setting the colour of a marigold in a pale sky; but he saw nothing, for his eyes were full of tears. The last sunbeams shone through them, and so dazzled him that a tall grave man in a flowing brown robe was close to him before he had noticed him. The birdcatcher started, thinking of sorcerers and spirits who take deceitful shapes; but he looked again, and made up his mind that this was no sorcerer but a good monk. He held out his hand, asking charity in a hasty ashamed way.

"Thou hast an honest trade and should'st take shame to beg," was the answer, while the new-comer looked gravely down upon him.

"Alas! holy father, who is there to buy my cages or my birds? You know yourself that the Spaniards have burned our towns and wasted our fields, and now the plague is on us."

"Alas! it is too true," said the monk sorrowfully, "and the rich oppress the poor, and the poor have no pity upon one another. But if you, Raymond Caylon——"

"You know my name!" exclaimed the birdcatcher, alarmed, and for a moment again suspecting sorcery; but his eyes sank ashamed as he met the grave lofty look of the monk, who without answering his question went on: "When it is in your power to help others, remember what you felt in your own need. Show me your cages."

"This is the largest and best made."

“Return home; it is a league hence; but take courage, good news is waiting for you there. As soon as you arrive open the window, set the cage on the table, and say, ‘Little Azure Blue, do your duty.’ Farewell, Raymond Caylon.”

Raymond would have caught at the brown floating robe to detain the monk, and ask a dozen questions, but it vanished out of his grasp, and only a few drops of dew remained in his hand. The monk was gone, and no trace of him was left; but Raymond fell on his knees among the evergreen oaks, and crossed himself in awe, for he knew now that he had seen St. Stapier.

You may be quite sure that he hastened home as fast as he could: have you never yourselves forgotten that you were tired and out of heart when some unexpected delight has proved to be awaiting you? Without stopping to rest a moment after he had reached his cottage, he put the cage on the only table in it, and said in a trembling voice, “Little Azure Blue, do your duty.” In a moment a sky-blue bird came flying in, perched in the cage, and began to sing a song so wild and sweet that there are no words to tell what it was like. And while it sang the table became covered with dainty dishes, fish and game and fowl, a roasted peacock, a boar’s head—dishes which only nobles ate of, and they not every day. Raymond stood gazing, too much amazed to eat; he only repeated “St. Stapier! St. Stapier! St. Stapier!” like one out of his wits, till hunger reminded him sharply that these good things were there to be eaten; and then he was about to fall to, when the thought of all the poor starving creatures in the village, as hungry as himself, crossed his mind, and he hurried out to bid them to the feast, as the good saint had enjoined him. The cottage was soon more than full; men, women, and children came, lean and pale with long want, but their great wonder almost took away their appetite. They sat on the floor, they crowded round the table, they stood outside, and there was abundance for all. Such a day had never been known in the village, even in the good old days before the Spaniards wasted the land, and the sire de Chaufontaine became their seigneur. A murmur ran through the little crowd that surely the lord of Chaufontaine would hear of this marvellous bird and then——! But Raymond said that St. Stapier would surely protect his own gift. While they were yet speaking of this matter low and anxiously, like oppressed men,

the sweet song of the bird suddenly ceased; it spread its blue wings and was gone in a moment. All looked on dismayed, all wondered whether it would ever return again; but Raymond's faith in St. Stapier was firm, and he assured them that the next day Azure Blue would provide another feast. And he was right. Day after day the whole village was fed; day after day Azure Blue sang his magic song, till a good harvest had brought back plenty to the country, and the Spaniards and fever had both left the land. And then, and not till then, did the seigneur of Chaufontaine hear of the gift which St. Stapier had made to Raymond Caylon.

No one ever heard who betrayed the secret kept so long, but one day a squire came from Chaufontaine with an order that Raymond should follow him instantly, with his cage, to the presence of his master. Raymond trembled as he unwillingly set out; all the villagers stood sorrowful at their doors and watched him go by, for they were sure that, even if he came back safe, it would be without the precious cage. The sire de Chaufontaine looked grim when Raymond came before him. "Is it thou," he cried, "who hast kept this treasure to thyself all these months past? a treasure not fit for peasants, for whom black bread and chestnuts are too good. It was thy duty to have brought it to me, thy lord! Thou dost merit death for this base knavery; but none can say that I am an ill lord; fix thy price and it shall be paid thee."

Raymond looked helplessly dismayed. Not a vassal far or near dared disobey the sire de Chaufontaine; yet he faltered out, "My lord, I may not barter away the gift of St. Stapier!"

"Fool!" answered the baron. "Hast thou heard of my chamber of roses?"

Too well did all his vassals know that name; some had seen the inside of that dungeon deep down in the old grey tower of the castle, where the baron tortured poor wretches who had displeased him. He called it in cruel mockery his chamber of roses, and laughed to see the birdcatcher turn pale.

"Choose!" he repeated; and Raymond seeing there was in truth no choice, hoped that St. Stapier would forgive him—surely he would if he knew the sire de Chaufontaine—so asked boldly for the Mill of Croissac in payment for his cage.

"No more?" laughed his lord. "That shalt thou have; and here is

my notary to draw up a deed of gift. Master notary, write that the Mill of Croissac belongs to Raymond Caylon and his heirs for ever, and make it sure."

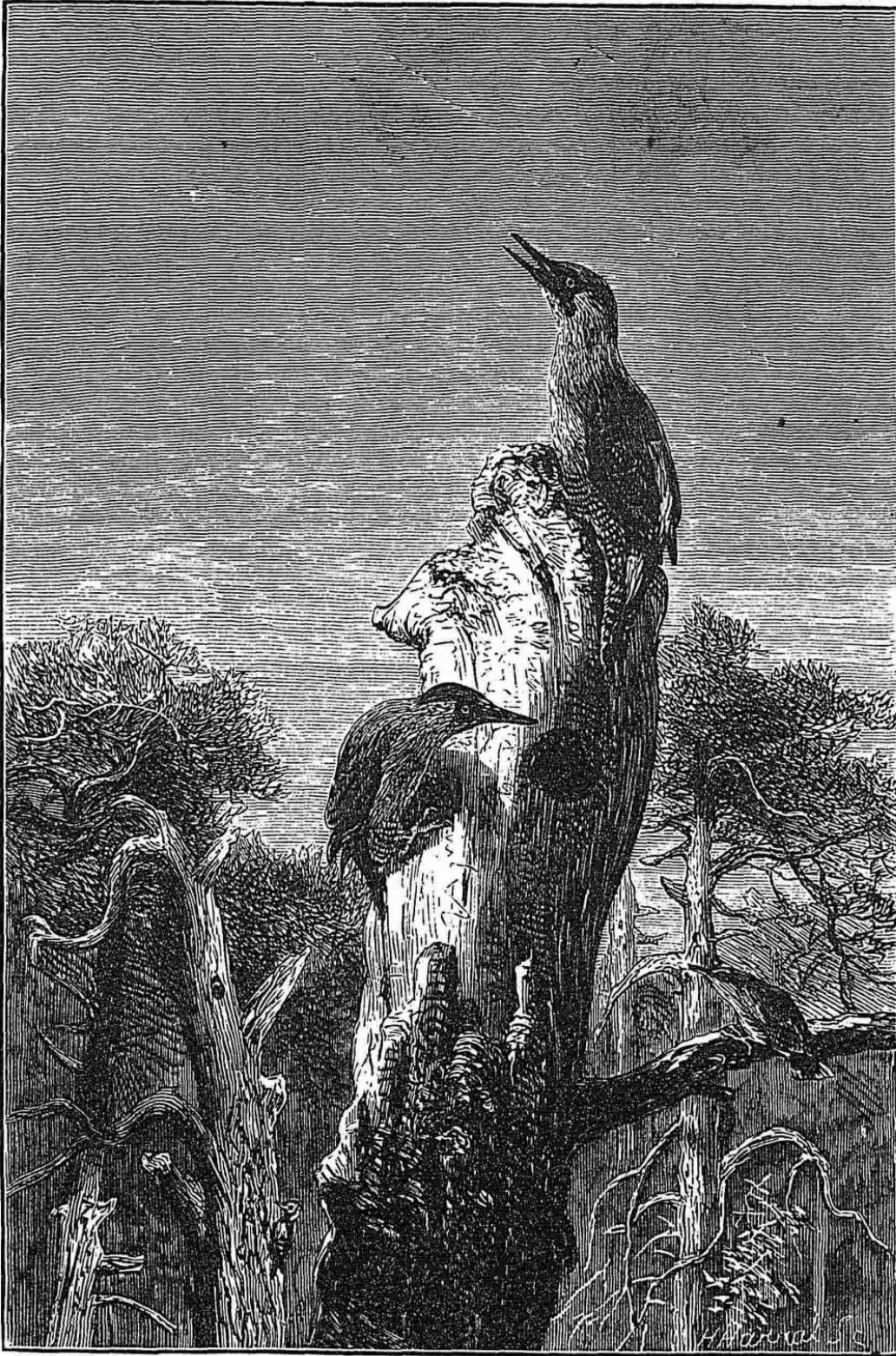
The baron put his large seal at the bottom of the parchment, and Raymond went away, on the whole well pleased, though he had left the cage behind him. Scarcely was he gone when the sire de Chaufontaine sent messengers all over Languedoc to invite his noble friends to a banquet where one single bird should furnish the feast. They came from far and near; the hall was decked, the tables covered with dishes, but all empty; the guests stood in wonder looking at their host. "Silence, noble lords," he said. "Listen!" and placing the cage on the table he shouted, "Little Azure Blue, do your duty." There was a deep silence of expectation. Suddenly through the open window with a great noise of wings entered a grey bird; its eyes were yellow and large, its beak and claws sharp. It perched in the cage, uttered three loud shrieks, and went as it had come.

There was no feast at Chaufontaine that day; the guests went away hungry, leaving the baron in such a rage as no one had seen him in before, which is saying much. Doubtless he would have been revenged on Raymond Caylon, but he had not time. He fell ill of some unknown sickness that day, and died before the week's end. And the Caylons are still at the Mill of Croissac.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE WOODPECKER, AND OTHER CLIMBERS.

"**W**HAT an odd noise that bird makes!" exclaimed Annie Cameron one day when Miss Gordon and her pupils were out walking. "It is a bird, is it not? I thought just now it was somebody laughing, but it does not sound quite like a human being's laugh."

"A human being? no," said Mary Gordon; "but it is somebody laughing, for all that: it is the yaffle. I hear him continually in the coppice close to the farm, tapping and hammering away at the trees, and laughing when it is going to rain."



THE WOODPECKER.

"Nonsense, Mary," exclaimed Lucy Wenham; "what can you mean?—a bird laughing when it is going to rain?"

"Well, that's quite true; he does laugh when it is going to rain."

"But why?"

"I don't know, I am sure. Because he is so pleased to think that the rain will drive the insects out of their holes in the tree for him, I suppose. Is that the reason, Aunt Janet?"

"That is more than I can venture to say, Mary," said Miss Gordon. "but it is quite true that the yaffle, or woodpecker, does make that odd laughing noise more frequently before rain. Some of the country people believe that he is calling for rain, as the sailors are said to whistle for the wind. The French peasants understand his cry to be 'Plieu! plieu!' (patois for *pluie*), and think he calls for rain because the insects on which he feeds are more difficult to find in dry weather, as they then retreat further into the cavities of the wood in search of coolness. In Burgundy they call him *Le Procureur du Meunier*, from the notion that both bird and miller, unless the rain falls, will be in want of work and food. The hard-working labourers, who think all work a punishment, have a tradition that the woodpecker was once a baker who idled away his time, lolling on the counter, and cheated the poor people of bread by selling it to them with false measures, and that he is punished for this by having to work hard for his bread."

"Is it such *very* hard work, tapping the trees, Miss Gordon?" asked Annie.

"Not with the tool with which he works. His bill is formed for boring into trees, and is wonderfully strong, shaped like a wedge, almost as hard as steel, and with a fine edge like a chisel. Buffon, it is true, pities him very much for his 'incessant toil and slavery,' and 'his painful posture when at work,' and talks of his 'dull insipid existence;' but this seems quite a mistake; the work would be very hard to a bird unfitted for it, certainly, but the woodpecker's whole body is formed for his task, as I will show you presently; and I have no doubt he has just as much pleasure in hunting after insects, and dislodging them from their holes, as any hunter has in chase of his game, or as the humming bird has in exploring flowers for the same purpose."

"Oh yes!" cried Mary. "I call him a very merry bird, and I am sure it is great fun to him to pick out a nice fat grub. He seems as lively as possible, running up the trees and poking about them. Let

us go and try if we can find him, Auntie ; I dare say he is somewhere about the old elms in this meadow."

"Well, I should like to see him carpentering very much," said Annie.

As they came near the elm trees, a large green bird with a red head flew out.

"Here he is," cried Mary. "Now, Lucy, creep along gently, and you will see him running up the trunk in a minute."

"Yes, there he is. How fast he runs up!"

"Did you ever observe that he always runs up and never down the tree?" asked Miss Gordon.

"No ; does he ? Why is that ?" asked Mary.

"The shape of his body is exactly fitted for climbing up," said Miss Gordon, "so when he gets up to the top of the tree, or the branch, he flies off, and begins at the bottom again. See how active he is, and how industrious, hammering away there ; do you hear him tapping that hollow branch ? he knows at once by the sound that it is hollow, and therefore infested by insects ; and he chisels away and bores into the wood till he ferrets out the creatures."

"He must be very useful, I think, in destroying the insects, that would soon kill the whole tree if they were left alone," observed Annie ; and Miss Gordon said she was quite right, and that they were very useful birds ; and, moreover, that they knew by instinct what trees were infested by insects, and that they never bored into sound ones. She made them notice the peculiar shape of the bird, telling them that the narrow flattened breastbone allowed them to cling more closely to the tree. The woodpeckers differed from the parrots, who were climbing birds too, in the shape of their feet and beaks.

Lucy said her aunt's parrot used his foot like a hand to grasp the perch or branch on which it was climbing, and helped itself up by its bill too.

"Yes," said Miss Gordon, "so it does ; and its foot is soft like a hand, and made to clasp with. It has two claws forward, and two backward, and so has the woodpecker ; but unlike the parrot's soft foot, the woodpecker has strong straight hind toes, which help to support him in a perpendicular position on the sides of trees : and the strong pointed shafts of the stiff short tail feathers are very useful too in keeping him firmly on the tree while he hammers upon it. Mr. Yarrell says the breastbone is peculiarly formed, and has a narrow shallow keel

enabling the bird to lie close to the tree, so as to bring the centre of gravity forward, and lessen the strain on the muscles of the legs. The woodpecker has to dig into the tree for its food, and so it wants a good strong beak to pierce the wood with: the little creepers do not want such strong bills, because they eat other insects, which live chiefly in the chinks and crevices of the bark; and so they are formed for rapid motion, and to run up and down and all over the tree."

"How curious and wonderful that is," said Mary, "how the creatures are formed for the lives they have to lead."

"So it is, and I am very glad you have found it out," replied Miss Gordon. "It is a very wonderful and beautiful truth that Providence has given to every created animal a body especially fitted for the life it has to live, and to enable it to get the food proper for it, &c. Climbing birds have bills and claws exactly suited to their wants, and so have birds of prey. Ducks and other swimming birds have webbed feet to use as oars, and broad bills, with which to gather up the aquatic plants or to shovel in the soft mud, which is full of the worms and other insects on which they feed. The ducks have also a sort of fringe of the plates along the edges of the bill, which acts as a strainer to sift minute morsels of food from the mud; and the bill itself is furnished with many nerves, which enable the bird to use it as an organ of touch to discover what it could not find by sight. Chickens have short strong beaks and feet with which to scratch about among the dust for their grains and seeds, and so on. The woodpecker feeds also a good deal upon ants, and may often be seen on the ground at work on an ant-hill, picking up the ants or their eggs with its long thin tongue, which has a horny tip with little barbs pointing backwards like fish-hooks, to secure them tightly: it is, moreover, continually covered with a glutinous moisture, produced by a gland communicating with the mouth. By means of a slender muscle attached to a bone passing round the back of the head, the tongue can be projected far out of the mouth with great rapidity."

Mary asked if there were more than one species of woodpecker.

"Four species are known in England: the Yaffle, Yaffel, or Green Woodpecker, is the most common, I believe."

"Has it any other name?" added Annie.

"Many others: the 'Yappingale,' 'Popinjay,' 'High Hoe,' 'Hew-hole,' 'Rainbird,' &c. It is found nearly all over Europe, from Russia

and Scandinavia to Spain and Italy, but I have never heard of him in Ireland. The black and white spotted woodpeckers, however, are the most common species in most parts of Europe."

"And where do they build their nests?" asked Lucy.

"In the holes of trees. If they can find a ready-made hole to their mind, they use that for their nest, and lay from five to seven smooth white eggs upon the soft decayed wood. Otherwise they hew out one for themselves."

"How very clever of them," said Mary.

"Another of the British woodpeckers, the great spotted one, has the character of being clever enough to try to save himself the trouble of boring into the wood of the tree by making the insects come out to him."

"How does he manage that?" asked Annie.

"By putting his bill into a crack, and making a noise as if the tree were splitting, which is said to frighten the insects, and drive them out of their haunts. This bird, as well as the lesser spotted woodpecker, is black and white with a crimson head. The king of the woodpeckers, however, is the large ivory-billed woodpecker of North America. Its bill is an inch broad at its base, and very much of the colour and hardness of ivory. The North American Indians value these very much to make into ornaments, and will often give three or four buck-skins for one. This bird seeks out the most lofty trees of the forest, and seems particularly fond of the great cypress trees in the swamps, where he works away at the rotten timber, his trumpet-like note and loud strokes resounding through these savage wilds. Cartloads of bark may be seen lying round enormous pine trees where he has been at work, and such a quantity of chips all about, as to lead one to suppose half-a-dozen men had been at work the whole morning with their axes. In an hour or two one of these birds will make a bushel of chips. The Spaniards call them on this account *carpenteros*. The Indians look upon this woodpecker as a hero, and are fond of wearing his splendid carmine crest, believing that it will inspire them with his strength and courage."

"Do you remember the woodpecker that helped Hiawatha, Miss Gordon?" asked Annie.

Lucy and Mary were eager to know the story, and Annie repeated the lines in Longfellow's poem, explaining that the woodpecker was

supposed in the fable to have helped Hiawatha, by telling him where to aim his arrows to gain the victory over a great magician :

“Then the grateful Hiawatha
Called the Mama, the woodpecker,
From his perch among the branches
Of the melancholy pine-tree;
And, in honour of his service,
Stained with blood the tuft of feathers
On the little head of Mama:
Even to this day he wears it—
Wears the tuft of crimson feathers—
As a symbol of his service.”

“But that is only a fable,” said Lucy, rather scornfully. “It is not true.”

“Not true of course, Lucy, that the woodpecker spoke and directed Hiawatha where to smite his enemy, but the whole poem is founded upon the traditions of the Indians, and is very interesting on that account.”

“Is the woodpecker respected anywhere else, Miss Gordon?” asked Annie.

“Yes; in the steppes of Poland and Russia, I believe, the bird is cherished, and it is regarded in these places as a useful guide to water.”

“How is that?” asked Annie.

“When seen on the open steppes, it always flies towards the trees, and so by following it travellers are guided to the pools of water, the rivers, &c., where alone trees are to be found.”

“It seems a very useful bird, then,” said Lucy.

One species, however, called the Red-headed Woodpecker in the United States, is said to be rather mischievous in one respect: it commits a good many thefts on the Indian cornfields when the grain is milky, and upon the orchards, so that a price was formerly set upon its head. Mr. Wilson, an American ornithologist, says that this bird is a great epicure in fruit, and always chooses the best, sweetest, and ripest apples for his own eating, so that his presence in the tree proves the excellence of the fruit. “When disturbed in the tree,” he says, “he seizes a capital one, by striking his open bill deep into it, and bears it off to the woods.”

“I wonder if anybody ever had a tame woodpecker?” observed Mary.
“I should like to have one.”

"You would not keep it long, Mary, if it were as destructive as one of the ivory-billed woodpeckers which Mr. Wilson, having wounded slightly on the wing, carried home in his pocket, and locked up in his room, while he went to see that his horse was taken care of. When he came back, in less than an hour, he found his bed covered with large pieces of plaster; and a hole in the wall, just under the ceiling, large enough to admit his whole fist. He tied a string round the bird's leg, and fastened it to the table, and went to get some food for it. When he came back, he found it had nearly ruined the mahogany table, on which he heard it hard at work as he went upstairs."

"And what became of it? Did he succeed in taming it?"

"Oh no; it would not eat, and died in three days, of grief and starvation."

"Well, that was too bad of Mr. Wilson to keep it in prison," exclaimed Mary; "he ought to have let it go back to the forest when he found that it would not eat."

"What other climbing birds are there in England besides the woodpeckers?" asked Annie.

"I have told you of the little brown creepers which run so swiftly over and all about the trees. They are very graceful little birds, with slim bodies, greyish white breasts, and long tails, with stiff and pointed feathers, very useful in climbing."

"Do they laugh like the yaffle?"

"Oh no; they have only a little chirp, which they repeat as they creep about, picking the insects out of the crannies, and cleaning the young shoots and leaves of the blight. They have sharp tongues and curved bills. Another little climbing bird, the wryneck, visits us in April and leaves us in August or September, when the cuckoo migrates; some country people call it the 'cuckoo's mate.' It twists its head from side to side incessantly when it is eating, so that the dark stripe running down its back appears to wriggle about curiously; and the little tongue darts in and out most rapidly. It is also called the 'long tongue,' 'emmet hunter,' and 'snake bird,' because it hisses like a snake when its nest is disturbed, puffs out its feathers, and defends itself boldly. The nuthatch does the same, even more fiercely: it runs up and down the trees like the wryneck, but it has not the woodpecker's feet or stiff tail, and it is more often seen running down than up the tree."

"Does it feed upon insects too?" asked Annie.

"Yes, but it is still more fond of nuts, hazel nuts, and filberts; and I believe that the nuthatch and wryneck feed upon berries too; the wryneck is said to be exceedingly partial to elderberries. The nuthatch is a very amusing bird to watch, especially when it is cracking a nut. It fixes it in a chink of the tree, and tries to split the shell by using its body as a hammer: and grasping the branch with its feet, it turns upon them like a pivot, and strikes the nut with the whole weight of its body, making the neighbourhood resound with the strokes of its bill."

"Have either of these birds ever been tamed?" asked Lucy.

"Oh yes! they do very well in a cage, or in a room with other birds, but the nuthatch is rather a troublesome bird in captivity, because of its habit of boring holes in the wood. It will eat hempseed and oats, and if at large in a room will carry them to any cracks it can find in the floor, and put them up in a row, with the largest end downwards, in order to break them more easily, and then it will crack one after another most skilfully. A lady fed a pair of wild nuthatches the whole of one winter, and when they had young ones they brought them to visit her, and the little creatures would climb up the wall or the blinds while she put their food upon the board. When the sparrows came to steal this, and she drove them away, they seemed quite to understand that she was doing this to protect them, and did not attempt to fly away themselves."

"Dear little things!" exclaimed Mary. "And what became of them?"

"They were frightened away by the report of a gun one day, and never returned," said Miss Gordon.

"What a pity! Did you ever hear of tame wrynecks?" asked Lucy.

"They must be amusing little pets, I should think."

"Yes, they are; they put themselves into such funny attitudes, and bow and spread out their tails, and twist their heads about in a very odd way. A gentleman who reared two wrynecks said they became so tame that they quite teased him, by hanging about his clothes, and crying after him whenever they saw him, so that one day he grew quite out of patience with them, and drove one out of the window."

"And did it ever come back?"

"Oh yes! he called it towards evening, and it came back and let him catch it. But here we are at home. Make haste and get ready for tea."

C. E. D.



“SUCH IS THE LIFE OF MAN.”

HUMAN LIFE has been compared to many things, but not often to a game of backgammon! Why not to chess much rather?

Nay, chess is not half as good a simile, for in that royal game a man's movements are in his own power, and his will rules his fortune throughout; and such is by no means the case in life.

For the circumstances in which a man is placed, and the accidents (otherwise providences) which happen to him from childhood to old age, are not of his choosing. These come to him like the throws of dice to a backgammon player, as chances beyond his control. What shall he do then? Sit down with folded arms and let Time and Chance carry him where they will?

Nay, there is freedom of action as well as Time and Chance both for the backgammon player and the man. The throws of dice can be played more ways than one. Unskilful play will often make a good throw useless, and skilful, turn a bad one to good account.

And if we do not say *always*, that is because we are speaking of backgammon as well as life. Of life we might say *always*. As far as this world goes, however, the simile is a correct one, and the Emblem would bear two mottos—“Such is the Life of Man,” and “Unlucky accidents are to be borne and made the best of:” for that is what may be called the very beauty of the game.

The Burial of the Linnet.

Words by J. H. G.

Music by ALFRED SCOTT GATTY.

Andantino.

1. Found in the gar-den—dead in his beau-ty. Ah! that a lin-net should
2. Bu - ry him kind-ly— up in the cor-ner; Bird, beast, and gold-fish are

The first system of music features a vocal melody in G major, 6/8 time, marked 'Andantino'. It is accompanied by a piano accompaniment consisting of a treble and bass clef staff with chords. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staff.

die in the Spring! Bu - ry him, com-rades, in pi - ti - ful
se - pulchred there. Bid the black kit - ten march as chief

The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staff.

du - ty, Muf - fle the din - ner bell, So - lemn - ly ring.
mourn - er, Wav - ing her tail like a plume in the air.

The third system concludes the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staff.

3. Bury him nobly—next to the donkey;
Fetch the old banner, and wave it about:
Bury him deeply—think of the monkey,
Shallow his grave, and the dogs got him out.

4. Bury him softly—white wool around him,
 Kiss his poor feathers—the first kiss and last;
 Tell his poor widow kind friends have found him:
 Plant his poor grave with whatever grows fast.

5. Farewell, sweet singer! dead in thy beauty,
 Silent through summer, though other birds sing.
 Bury him comrades, in pitiful duty,
 Muffle the dinner-bell, mournfully ring.

REVIEWS.

The Prayer-Book Interleaved; with Historical Illustrations and Explanatory Notes, &c. &c. With a Preface by the Lord Bishop of Ely. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. (London, Oxford, and Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1866.)

WE are indebted to the publishers for bringing under our notice a work most valuable for family reference and instruction. It is not for our very young readers, of course, but for the growing-up elder ones will be found full of interest, as drawing their attention to the meaning and origin of the beautiful prayers, hymns, &c., of our liturgy, and giving the history of the different services of our Church. Older members of the family, too, will find in its pages information they never obtained before; for the historical and explanatory pages are the fruits of a learned research few have time or opportunity to go through. We will add that the preface, by the Bishop of Ely, is a sufficient warrant for the soundness of the annotations which follow.

The Contributions of Q.Q. By Jane Taylor. Thirteenth Edition. (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 27, Paternoster Row.)

WE quite agree with Mr. Isaac Taylor that it was desirable to re-publish these Essays. They had a great popularity half a century ago, are excellent in themselves, and, though savouring of an old-fashioned, rather didactic style, cannot fail, we think, to amuse and interest some young people, even in this excitement-craving age. They belong to a meditative, thoughtful school; rather "slow" perhaps, now and then, in every sense of the word, but also occasionally redolent with a grace and freshness more common in past days, when authors thought more and wrote less than is the case at present. "Spring flowers" is a sketch which will charm some readers as it has charmed us, and the "Discontented Pendulum" is almost worthy of Hans Christian Andersen.

SEPTEMBER MEMORANDA.



THIS month still retains the name it received from Romulus, in whose calendar it stood the seventh; whereas it is the ninth in ours. Several efforts were made during the reigns of the Emperors to get the name changed, as those of Quintilis and Sextilis had been. It was called successively *Tiberius*, *Germanicus*, *Antoninus*, *Hercules*, and *Tucitus*. *Tiberius*, after the third emperor; *Germanicus*, by Caligula, after his great and good father, whose virtues he would have better shown his respect for by imitating; *Antoninus*, from Antoninus the Pious; but soon after, *Hercules*, to flatter the wicked Commodus, who at one time adopted the name himself, went about in a lion's skin and with a club, and caused a figure of Hercules to be struck on his coins: lastly, *Tucitus*, during the reign of the emperor so called. But none

of these changes took any permanent hold on public custom. All the imperial names died out with their originators, and September has continued September down to the present day.

Our old friend Verstegan's account of the Saxon name is rather more diffuse than usual: "September they called Gerst-monat, for that barley which that moneth commonly yielded was anciently called Gerst, the name of barley being given unto it by reason of the drink therewith made, called beer, and from beerlegh it came to be berlegh, and from berlegh to barley. So in lyke manner beer-hey, to wit, the ouerdecking or couering of beer, came to be called berham, and afterward barme, hauing since gotten I wott not how many names besydes. This excellent and healthsome licour, beer, anciently also called ael, as of the Danes it yet is (beer and ael beeing in effect

all one), was first of the Germans invented and brought in use."

About 995. The Translation of S. Cuthbert. Those who have opened old works on natural history, such as *Olaus Magnus* upon Norway, *M. Rondelet* upon fishes, and even our own English *Gerard* of later date, will see so many curious instances of mistakes of judgment upon eyesight, so to speak, and of a tendency to believe every report that was afloat, that they will walk with very wary steps in the perusal of reported wonders in old times. The truth is, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the inaccuracy of those who wrote could only be matched by the credulity of those who read. This is a fact which cannot be proved from legendary histories, but is so obvious in the statements made about natural objects, that it is quite fair to judge from one to the other. Most of our young readers who have ever visited the sea-shore know a star-fish by sight probably; what will they say, then, when they are told that a learned archbishop like *Olaus Magnus*, has figured them with eyes, noses, and mouths in the middle of their bodies, the legs sticking out all around like a picturesque headdress? Or what could they think of a "portrait au naif" of a "Marine Monster in the dress of a Bishop," which was caught in the year 1531, "en Pologne" as is stated, but where that is it would be difficult to say. Lest we should be thought to be inventing, however, we will give the full description: "I' ai veu un portrait d'un autre monstre marin à Rome, où il avoit esté onvoié avec lettres par lesquelles on assuroit pour certain que l'an 1531 on avoit veu ce mōstre en habit d'Euesque comme it est ci portrait, pris en Pologne, é porté au Roi dudit pais; faisant certains signes pour monstrier qu'il avoit grand desir de retourner en la mer, où estant mené, se jetta incontinent dedans." An account evidently written in all good faith, though the "portrait au naif" represents a creature with a man's face, surmounted by a mitre-shaped helmet covered with fishy scales and graced behind with a little bit of flying drapery! Body the same, whilst the episcopal legs are ornamented by a row of buttony-looking marks as if the wearer were in high gaiters, the feet

being merely three-pronged nobs, and the hands five pointed claws; a jocose eye looking out from the scaly cheek, as if to quiz anyone who should believe in his existence.

With this warning we will proceed to the legend of S. Cuthbert, and thence to the natural history legend of his beads.

He was born a shepherd boy in *Lauderdale*, but having a vocation to an ascetic life became a monk of old *Melrose*, and was promoted to the bishopric of *Lindisfarne*, in *Holy Island*, off the coast of *Northumberland*, where he died A.D. 688. Before he expired, however, he gave a charge to his monks that in case of any fresh incursion of the Danes (then very troublesome neighbours) they should carry his bones with them wherever they went. This they promised, and S. Cuthbert "fell on sleep," and was buried.

Eleven years afterwards his body having been taken up and uncovered with a view to placing it in a more honourable tomb, it was, to the astonishment of everyone, found to be in a state of perfect preservation, never having undergone decay! Henceforth, therefore, the precious remains were placed in a shrine where they became the object of public veneration, and are said to have worked many miracles.

But a Danish invasion did at last take place, and the monks, faithful to the original promise made to S. Cuthbert, carried his bones with them to the main land, and began a pilgrimage which though it had many temporary pauses ended only in the year 995, when the oxen that drew the carriage on which the saint was laid "suddenly stood still" at a place called *Wardelaw*, on the east side of *Durham*. Nor could all the efforts of the bystanders "move it an inch, it seeming as if fastened to the ground." A holy man of the party was then informed by a vision that S. Cuthbert wished to be carried to *Dunholme*, where he should at length find a resting place, but here a new difficulty occurred, nobody knowing where *Dunholme* was, until a woman who had lost her cow was heard enquiring after it of another woman passing by, who answered that it had been seen in *Dunholme*; upon which the monks obtained the necessary information, and made the best of their way to the chosen spot.

In gratitude for which accidental guidance to the place, where S. Cuthbert was contented to remain, the woman and her cow were eventually carved on the north turret of the nine altars of Durham Cathedral, "where they are still shewn, though much defaced by weather," says Grose.

To which standstill of S. Cuthbert's remains, whether miraculous or voluntary on the part of the monks, we are indebted for the original foundation of Durham Cathedral.

So much for the Saint's historical legend; his natural history one is to be found in Walter Scott's "Marmion," which states that

"On a rock by Lindisfarne
S. Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name."

The tradition being that he forges these beads during a storm, sitting on one rock and manufacturing them on the one opposite, and that those who walk on the shore after such a storm find them scattered in all directions.

But "S. Cuthbert's beads," what are they? who ever sees them? Unromantic science makes the answer, that they are the fossil remains of a star-fish; not Olaus Magnus's five-fingered jack, with eyes, nose, and mouth like a human being, but a sweet fantastic feathery star-fish fixed on the top of a jointed stem or stalk, the joints of which, separating after the fleshy coat which held them together had perished, were scattered about to be picked up by future generations, not only on the sea-shore of Lindisfarne, but on the north coast of England generally, and even in inland streams.

This fossil is called an Encrinite or Lily-stone. Dr. Harvey in his sea-side book wrote (alas! that we cannot say writes) that "the modern seas of Britain furnish us but with a single species of the family Crinoidæ, the group to which the lily-stars of early times belonged; and it is not a little curious that this species, though it afterwards becomes free, swimming about like any other star-fish, is in its infancy affixed to a stalk perfectly analogous to that of the encrinite."

We can only further refer our young readers to the "Sea-Side Book," page 134, or Professor Forbes' "History of British Star-Fishes,"

pages 5 and 11, for a "portrait au naif" of the feather-star (*Comatula rosacea*) both in its perfect free state and in its juvenile condition on a jointed stalk.

Sept. 19, 1665. The Great Plague of London was at its height.

It seems strange to give the date of a day to a pestilence which lasted nearly a year, but it was during the week ending with Sept. 19 that that terrible Plague in the reign of Charles the Second reached its most destructive fury. In those seven days more than 10,000 people died in London. It broke out in the parish of St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, at a house to which some infected goods had been imported from Holland. It was one of the most awful calamities that had ever befallen the nation. Above 100,000 people were swept off by it, and the manner of death was most terrible,—the agonies of pain sometimes driving the sufferers to actual madness. The author of "Robinson Crusoe"—De Foe—wrote a "Journal of the Plague Year," which, although not actually written by an eye-witness, as it seems to be, gives a record of true facts and is a perfectly life-like picture of the scenes which occurred, and of the feelings which were experienced at that time. His account was drawn from many sources, among others a medical MS. still preserved in the British Museum; but it will for ever remain a proof of his genius that he could throw himself into such positions as that of Robinson Crusoe and the sufferers from the Plague, by the mere perusal of descriptions, and persuade people that he had personally experienced what he tells about.

Pestilence is one of God's sore judgments on the world, and is a mystery which neither physicians nor philosophers can solve. We talk about "epidemics," it is true, and of "infectious" and "contagious" diseases, and each man knows what his neighbour means when he uses the words. You may be told that an epidemic is a complaint "going about" in the air, an "infectious" disease is conveyed from one person to another by the breath, a "contagious" one by the touch, &c., but when we have talked it all over we know no more than before of the *origin* of an epidemic or

the *nature* of infection. No one can tell us what it is which passes from one person to another when measles, or hooping-cough, or scarlet fever, are "caught," as we call it. Nor whether it is a gas, or a fungus, or an animalcule, or what, which suddenly starts up in some corner of the world, as plague or cholera, to go off on its rounds of destruction. Still, Christians are not fatalists, and if we cannot tell whence pestilences come, we can see pretty well where many of them are most apt to go, and ought to take measures accordingly for preventing their dealing more hardly with us than God intended they should do. Cleanliness is next to good health as well as to godliness; and fresh air and clean water can prevent many evils even when they cannot cure them after they have come.

1666. Sept. 2 (old style). The Great Fire of London. This was the celebrated fire which took place during the reign of Charles the Second, only a few months after the cessation of the Great Plague. Sept. 2nd was a Sunday, and the fire began either the night before or early on Sunday morning, and burned unceasingly for four days and four nights, favoured by a strong wind, the narrowness of the streets, and the combustible state of the houses (chiefly of wood) owing to a long-continued drought. Moreover, so great a panic seized on the populace, that very few efforts were made to put a stop to the spread of the flames. Nor did any that were made avail, until a regular system was adopted of making large gaps in front of their advance by blowing up with gunpowder masses of houses in the different directions the fire was seen approaching. Very minute details of this terrible event have come down to us in two diaries kept by two very celebrated men at the time; one, John Evelyn, the author of "*Sylva, or a Discourse of Forest Trees*"—the other, Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty in the reigns of Charles the Second and James the Second. These two men were great friends, but their characters were very different; Evelyn's tone of mind being so much more thoughtful and religious, Pepys' more frivolous and egotistical; and their accounts of the Great Fire vary accordingly.

Grave John Evelyn records as follows:—

"Sept. 2, 1666. This fatal night about ten,* began that deplorable fire near Fishe Street in London."

"Sept. 3. The fire continuing, after dinner I took coach with my wife and sonne, and went to the Bankside in Southwark, where we beheld that dismal spectacle, the whole City in dreadful flames near ye water side; all the houses from the Bridge, all Thames Street and upwards towards Cheapside down to the Three Cranes, were now consum'd. The fire having continu'd all this night (if I may call that night which was as light as day for ten miles round about, after a dreadful manner), when, conspiring with a fierce eastern wind in a very drie season, I went on foote to the same place, and saw the whole south part of ye Citty burning from Cheapside to ye Thames, and all along Cornhill (for it kindl'd back against ye wind as well as forward), Tower Streete, Fenchurch Streete, Gracious Streete, and so along to Bainard's Castle, and was now taking hold of St. Paule's Church, to which the scaffolds contributed exceedingly. The conflagration was so universal and the people so astonish'd, that from the beginning, I know not from what despondency or fate, they hardly stirr'd to quench it, so that there was nothing heard or seene but crying out and lamentation, running about like distracted creatures. . . . Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle! such a shaply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor to be outdone till the general conflagration! All the skie was of a fiery aspect like the top of a burning oven, the light seene above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant my eyes may never behold the like. . . . Thus I left it this afternoone burning, a resemblance of Sodom or the last day.

"Sept. 4. The burning still rages . . . the stones of Paule's flew like grenados, ye melting lead running down the streetes in a stream."

On Sept. 6 Evelyn describes the fire as

* This must have been the night of the 1st, according to Pepys, and was probably so meant here.

having crossed to Whitehall, to the great confusion of the Court, and that the King commanded him and several other gentlemen to look after "the quenching" in various directions, and people began at last to bestir themselves to more purpose, and so doing came to the decision that nothing was likely to put a stop to it but the "blowing-up of so many houses as might make a wider gap than any had yet been made by the ordinary method of pulling them down with engines."

Some "stout seamen," he tells us, had suggested this at the very beginning of the fire, but the rich owners of the houses that must have gone first, objected. Now, however, it was "commanded," possibly therefore by the King, and was certainly carried into execution with success.

In Pepys' account, it is true, we find the mention of a blowing up of houses in Tower Street two days before, viz., on Sept. 4, and that it was done with good effect. But as the fire continued to rage up to the 6th instant, the remedy cannot have been regularly enforced so early as the 4th. We cannot enter fully into the subject here, but recommend our young readers to refer hereafter for further particulars to the pages of Evelyn and Pepys themselves. We will give a little bit of quaint, chatty old Pepys however, as a specimen of his rambling way of describing a great public calamity. It must be admitted that his diary, with its host of petty personal details, has much more the air of having been written at the time than that of Evelyn.

"Sept. 2, 1666. Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast of to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning to tell us of a great fire they saw in the city.* So I rose and slipped on my nightgown, and went to her window, and thought (it) to be on the back side of Marke Lane at the farthest, but being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off, and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window and

* To be plainly seen at that hour at some distance it had probably begun, as Evelyn describes, the night before.

saw the fire not so much as it was, and further off. So to my closet to set things to rights after yesterday's cleaning. By and by, Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish Street by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places . . . and did see the houses at the end of the Bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side of the end of the bridge. . . ." By and by (for space does not allow our giving the full account), we find from our diarist that he had given some information about the fire, which was carried to the King and Duke of York, who summoned him to the royal presence and sent through him an order to the Lord Mayor that houses should be pulled down in advance of the foe, which order Pepys delivered to "my Lord Mayor," whom he met rambling up and down the streets "like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck." But my Lord Mayor, on hearing the King's message, cried out "like a fainting woman," "Lord, what can I do? I am spent; people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it!"

"So he left me and I him," continues Pepys, "and walked home, seeing people all almost distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire."

We wish we could give Pepys' further account of how a friend lent him a cart in which he sent away his "money and plate and best things" out of the reach of the spreading fire, and how he was "eased at heart" to have his "treasure so well secured." How, too, on the next day (Sept. 6) his friend, Sir W. Batten, "did dig a pit in his garden," to bury his wine in, while Pepys took the opportunity of "laying therein all the papers of his office that he could not otherwise dispose of." How, again, later in the evening, as he describes it, "I and Sir W. Penn did dig another and put our wine in, and I my Parmazan cheese, as well as my wine and some other things."

These details are amusingly characteristic of the writer, who was evidently a great connoisseur in eating and drinking. On the 7th his record is—

"Up by five o'clock, and, blessed be God! find all well, and by water to Paul's wharf. Walked thence and saw all the town burned; and a miserable sight of Paul's Church, with all the roofs fallen, and the body of the quire fallen into St. Faith's."

"St. Faith's" being an old underground church like the old underground Saxon Cathedral below the present minster at York.

As regarded old St. Paul's Church, however, there could not have been very much to regret. It had a very magnificent classic portico it is true, designed by Inigo Jones; but grand as this was in itself, it must have looked strange tacked on to a half worn-out Gothic Church, of which old Fuller speaks as "formerly an ornament, now an eyesore to the city."

These words were written but a very few years before its destruction by the Great Fire made room for the St. Paul's Cathedral of the present day. This was built by Sir Christopher Wren, on whose tomb is inscribed the following words:—"Lector si monumentum quaeris, circumspice!" Reader, if you seek a monument, look around you!

Of the Great Fire generally one writer remarks, "Heaven be praised old London *was* burnt!" and there can be no doubt that what was in one way such a terrible destruction, not only carried off the last traces of the plague from the city, but introduced a better system of building and ventilation, and consequently more health into London.

It is computed that 200,000 sufferers encamped in the fields about Islington and Highgate during the fire; that ten millions worth of property was destroyed by it, and 100 parish churches, and yet only six persons lost their lives; whereas the plague which preceded it carried off 10,000 in one week.

1709. Sept. 18. The birthday of Samuel Johnson. Some 50 or 60 years ago, when children's books were very few in number, Dr. Johnson's "Rasselas" was put into their hands as a matter of course, as a story they

might read if they liked. And they could and did read it then, with both interest and pleasure, although the profound philosophy it contains went necessarily over their heads, and the language was difficult to follow. But fine mystic impressions were left of the "happy valley" in which poor Rasselas was so unhappy;—the flying experiment of Imlac; the distress of the Princess when her favourite attendant was lost, &c., and a good general impression remained at last that happiness was not to be looked for in outward comforts, and that perfect happiness was not to be looked for anywhere in this world.

Dr. Johnson wrote "Rasselas" in the short space of one week, in order to get money for paying the expenses of his mother's funeral. He must have been very poor then, our young readers will say. Yes, he was *very* poor at one time, and never very rich; but he was very generous, very wise, very good, and very charitable; a great sufferer all his life from diseased blood, a profound believer, a powerful thinker; his reasoning faculty being, perhaps, of a clearer and more healthy character than that of any man whose words and writings have come down to us before or since.

But we should never have known more than half the man, had we had his writings only to judge him by. Happily for the generations that were to follow, he had an enthusiastic admirer who took down the conversations between the great man and his friends whenever he had the good fortune to be present at them: and as Johnson numbered the cleverest men of the day among his friends—Burke, Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c. &c., those conversations are richer in wisdom, in wit, and in instruction than almost anything that can be found in our language. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that "Boswell's Johnson" would be, next to the Bible, the wisest book to choose, were we cast on a desert island and obliged to have but one other. The noblest prayers, the soundest religious opinions, the grandest and most independent views of life, the most comforting examples, are to be found in its pages. Let the 18th of September, 1709, be an honoured day in the minds of English children.—ED.